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SERIES

OF

LETTERS

ON

Angling, Shooting, & Coursing.

BY ROBERT LASCELLES, ESQ.

IN THREE PARTS.

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Letters on Sporting.

PART I.

ANGLING.

LETTER I.

London, Feb. 1811.

AGREEABLE to your request, my dear G------, I have once more re-considered the proposal which you were formerly so urgent I should comply with; and although I am still very far from being a willing convert to your opinion, I shall nevertheless abide by the partiality which you have ever shown towards me, and the simple efforts of my pen.

The liberal reception, and the unbounded circulation, which the letters of Mr. Beckford have experienced, might probably have deterred me from writing upon that subject singly; for they contain every thing which such a subject can be

supposed capable of embracing: I hope, therefore, it will be some excuse for me, that I have not confined *my thoughts* to HUNTING alone, but have endeavoured, as far as in me lay, to give some idea of those four different rural amusements, which form the materials of the following pages. In fact, with regard to Fox-hunting, another reason might be adduced why something more is necessary to its illustration: the system of the chase is entirely changed; and that sport, which our ancestors would have called brilliant, is now termed dull and insipid. New times have introduced different fashions, and it appears a remarkable, but is at the same time a very accurate coincidence, that, accordingly as a man lives, so must his hounds be bred: *speed* is thus become the criterion of perfection: and I am sorry to say there are very few indeed, who, with this qualification, ever possess any *real bottom*.

The first subject, of which I intend to treat, is that of ANGLING: and as I hope, in the course of a few days, to make my annual excursion to SOUTH WALES, I will, from thence, relate to you my success in that department; previously, however,

collecting some few scattered thoughts, which my own experience, and that of others has, at various periods, suggested. Many are the authors who have endeavoured to render a treatise on this head useful and intelligible, but I do not think that any one of them has completely succeeded. Mr. Walton, the father of these, was, I dare say, a very good man; but I am much mistaken, if his abilities, in explaining the art, were equal to his patience in sustaining the pursuit of his favourite amusement; for when he asserts the superiority of Hampshire over all other counties in this respect, his experience cannot be supposed to have been very generally obtained: his knowledge, I should rather think, was local; for no one would otherwise have opened the campaign on the *New River*, at *Ware*, and made it the scene of future operations. My endeavour shall therefore be to render every thing as plain and explicit as possible, and should the information, which I offer to you, not prove quite so profitable as I wish, I trust the effort will not be deemed totally abortive.

Fishing, like most other pursuits, originated in necessity; and is indebted for any improvements,

which the art has since acquired, to the genius which has accompanied the different gradations of society. Accordingly, as the human race became more civilized and polished, the arts attained a greater perfection; and it was not until manufactures and commerce solely occupied the attention of mankind, that painting, sculpture, and architecture, began to lose ground.

The qualifications requisite to form a good fisherman are more numerous, and, in my opinion, more difficult of attainment than those which, in any other line, a sportsman can possibly require. It must be the natural bent of inclination which induces any man to prefer a particular pursuit; and, where so many are competitors for the same prize, no wonder the majority fail in the realization of their hopes. From practice, any one almost may become a good shot; strong nerves will make a bold rider, and experience a careful one; so that, with these requisites, a man may cut a *tolerable* figure. Such qualities, however, are trifling, compared with those which should be possessed by a complete angler. Science and art are here so nicely blended, that each without the other is a superfluous

acquisition; for whilst the former conducts you to the attack, the latter directs its chief operations.

A favourite author has defined fishing to be "a dull diversion," "a selfish and solitary amusement, fit only to teach patience to a philosopher;" and another sings---

"Yet, I grant, if in fishing you take much delight,
In a punt you may shiver from morning till night;
But though bless'd with the patience which Job had of old,
The devil a thing will you catch but a cold."

I will not pay so bad a tribute to the memory of these gentlemen, as to assert, that they were ignorant of this amusement: more partial to others I believe they were; and it was, doubtless, that partiality which induced the former to prefer the pleasures of the chase, and the latter those of the town: a little experience might have had the effect of changing the sentiments of both; or at least have spared them so severe a criticism; for a complete sportsman, like a good appetite, is seldom dainty.

I shall first endeavour to explain the properties of THE ROD; and pray excuse the remark, but

I cannot resist the temptation of adding, that as many of us no doubt have exclaimed against the too frequent application of it in our younger days, it is to be hoped we shall now profit from experience, and exercise it with discretion. There are two kinds, the double and single-handed, each of course adapted to the size of the river in which you fish; the former is generally of the length of 17 feet, and the latter of 15; the one weighing two pounds six ounces, and the other about 20 ounces less*. The plan, which many authors have recommended, of making your own rod, I do not by any means approve of: in the first place, there is not one man in five hundred mechanic enough to set about and finish any thing of the kind satisfactorily; and, without a good connection in Liverpool, from whence you can have a supply of hickory, the attempt would be entirely fruitless. For my own part, I would advise every gentleman to buy his

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* The following is the usual size of all rods:—

			lbs.	oz.
18 feet	Salmon rod,	four joints, and brassed,	2	14
17 feet	Trout ditto,	ditto, ditto,	2	6
15 feet	Ditto,	. .	1	4
13 feet	Ditto,	. .	1	2
13 feet	Ditto,	three joints, and ditto,	0	15

rods; he will then have an opportunity of suiting himself in each particular, and, provided he goes to a proper person, will never be disappointed. Higginbotham, Clark, &c. &c. have all their adherents; but (and I speak it from experience) I never found any so good as those made by Chevalier, nor any man more civil. I do not, however, *abuse* the idea of any one being his own artificer in this respect; it is absolutely necessary, that every person should be able to repair his rod when circumstances require it, and I make no doubt but I should feel as much pleasure in killing a fish with a weapon of my own make, as a partridge. It is a blessing, of which few perhaps can boast, of being totally independent of the world: to some ones and for some thing, we must always be indebted; nor do I see any reason why we should regret the necessity, if we but for a moment consider the value of those feelings which actuate us, and which charity should induce us to suppose predominate also in others. A man's knowledge, however, cannot be too extensive, nor can his mind be formed upon too liberal a scale; for the one will as carefully correct whatever the other so eagerly stimulates.

Much depends upon the proper choice of your rod: be sure that it taper regularly from the but to the point; nor should there, on any account, be a knot in the whole piece: for whenever a rod breaks in fair usage, it always happens from this cause. In general they are composed of three or four joints, for the better convenience of carriage; and either screw into a socket, or are simply fixed in. Neither of these kinds do I recommend, but to have one of two joints only, the but and top; and, by all means, to be attached by a splice, fastened by a small leathern thong, previously wetted, so that when it becomes dry it may contract and form a tighter bandage. The superiority of a two-jointed rod of this description, over such as I have before mentioned, is very great; for being disencumbered of a quantity of useless brass, the spring is much more regular and even, and there is by that means less likelihood of its breaking: the trouble, too, which frequently attends the separation of a many-jointed rod after a day's fishing, is thus got rid of, for the ends which go into the socket, in wet weather, always swell, and it is exceeding difficult, indeed sometimes impossible, to separate them,

until they are either held over a lighted candle, or have remained for some time in a dry situation: a brass hoop is commonly substituted as a remedy against this; but here also there is another disadvantage, for besides adding to the weight and stiffening the joint, it is frequently apt to fly out, and that at a time and in a situation, perhaps, which might spoil a good hour's diversion. All this is, therefore, obviated by the simple method I have described; and though some people may object to the inconvenience of carrying such a rod, a true sportsman will never allow so trifling a circumstance to operate to the prejudice of such an obvious advantage.

I think about six inches of whalebone should form the point: many have protested against this as being totally useless, and too heavy and stiff in proportion to the lower materials; but one great convenience compensates in my opinion for all, which is, that as the top is always more liable to meet with accidents from the interruption of trees and branches, especially on woody rivers, where you have sometimes to crawl for upwards of a hundred yards, and where self-preservation is the

principal care, whalebone alone is proof against misfortune. The rods, however, which are made in Edinburgh are entirely of wood; but in Scotland the rivers are more open and less liable to those obstructions I have before named. With good care, a rod will last a considerable time, and I think Mr. Walton, in his Treatise on Angling, speaks of one which he had used for twenty years: to preserve them, however, some attention should be paid to the dryness of their situation when laid up for the winter, and now and then it will be necessary to rub them over with a piece of flannel, previously dipped in sweet oil, never forgetting to clean them well with a linen cloth before they are again put aside.

The but should be particularly strong, so as to answer every effort you may be obliged to make in throwing a long line. I have tried various experiments, by adding to the length of a rod when I wished to throw a longer line than common, but I never found any one to answer: the proper bend was always spoiled, and the only method of remedying this inconvenience is to have a very strong but. I think this is the sum of what I can recollect

in regard to the rod: if, however, any thing else should occur to me worthy of remark, I will notice it in a future letter. There remains nothing but the rings, which should be as strong and large as possible, that your line may have a freer play, and not be incommoded by any chance obstacle.

My next will most probably be dated from the banks of the Usk; for, should the weather continue thus favourable, I will not longer delay my journey. —So adieu.

LETTER II.

Gloucester, March.

From the date of this you will guess that I am on my road for the mountains, and in fact I arrived here two days ago, but a heavy fall of snow has induced me, for the present, to make these my head-quarters: the roads, however, are not so impeded but I might travel if I chose, yet I prefer staying here till the weather is a little more settled, for so long as the hills retain their present complexion, no sport is to be expected. I am not mortified, I assure you, at the delay; for I consider a comfortable inn as one great luxury of life. You enter it unrestrained, and are received with a welcome altogether deprived of the formality of a visit: every one around you is anxious to do a kind office, and the only perplexity is in the issuing of your commands: the foppish waiter, the sleepy hostler,

the ruddy landlord, and the pert chambermaid, are all eager to tender their services, while in the midst appears the greasy landlady, when the well-known story of mutton for chops, beef for steaks, veal for cutlets, and chickens and ducks to roast, assails you with a volubility almost beyond the calculation of a Cocker! I own, however, I am pleased with all this; and, though the motives for such attendance are perhaps biassed too much by the "auri immensa cupido," still I never regret the customary duty, for I am well aware that, in this venal world, civility also, amongst other things, has its price. To a man whose mind is at ease to contemplate the vicissitudes of human life, here is ample scope for reflection; for you are no sooner seated than your eye is attracted towards lovely Charlotte, or amiable Louisa: Timothy Twitch, stay-maker, of Brentford, or Jonathan Sweet, grocer, of the Minories, doomed most likely by some wag, to have been hung at Tyburn, or exposed on the pillory in Moor-fields. If I really wished to provoke any one, I think I could not do it more effectually than by thus proclaiming him a candidate for notoriety: here indeed there is no distinction; Lucretia loses her chastity, and Brutus is no longer a patriot, whilst

the highest dignitary of the church sinks beneath the level of a town-crier. It would be difficult to form an estimate of the oddities of mankind; some are actuated by one reason, some by another; but in all, nature is generally the principal and most material sufferer. Bred under the influence of folly, and educated in the school of fancy, our first aim is to become conspicuous; the turf, the field, the bottle, and the stage, are each thought necessary to the accomplishment of a modern gentleman; and so strange indeed are the titles which now-a-days raise a man to eminence, that I much doubt if the boasted family of the WRONGHEADS are not more than rivalled by that of the MERRY ANDREWS. Still, however, we may wonder at the strange and unaccountable fancies by which mankind are chiefly actuated in these times; we may be able, perhaps, to trace it to no very remote period of our existence. We are too frequently sent out into the world, and to act for ourselves, at a moment when the mind is easily seduced, and the judgment liable to be fascinated by the most specious appearances. Immoderate restraint is equally, if not more, pernicious than unlimited indulgence. From the instant we first learn the value of distinction, the mind is inces-

santly at work for new objects of admiration, and it is only by a proper direction of those pursuits that we can hope to accomplish the end of our desires. I fear then, that the fate of individuals is too often determined by the disastrous rules of education, or, more properly speaking, by the influence and example of that Being, who, unfortunately, claims the title of preceptor:

> "Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
> Testa diu."

An authority to act may easily induce an inclination to obey. A modest perseverance, and a gentle admonition, are the safest and most alluring persuasions; but alas! how vague are the means, and how *petty* must be the resources of that man, who, perhaps from a simple retailer of tape and buckram, is advanced *by birth*, and not *by degree*, to the proud dignity of a college tutor!!

The SEVERN at this place becomes a considerable river, and, in its passage here, receives no less than five large and tributary streams, but its features otherwise are unimportant: we no longer behold the bold and dashing grandeur of the WYE,

or the less ambitious beauties of the USK; here the artist finds no attractions for the employment of his pencil. The silent awe in which we so lately beheld the ruins of TINTERN, filled us with admiration of those of our ancestors, whom it has become too much the fashion to style barbarous and profane. Such of their monuments, however, as are still remaining, exhibit more of pride than barbarity; and I think it but an ill compliment to their memory, as well as to our own understanding, to be so lavish of abuse of what we so vainly, but assiduously strive to emulate.

The salmon which are taken in this river, are nearly, if not equally, as good as those from the THAMES, and an impartial person would probably prefer them; neither of course can be had in perfection except on the spot, and as the latter rarely travel from their own shore, this at once accounts for the preference which it has so generally obtained*. Nothing can be finer than the Scotch sal-

* Salmon, on the Lake of Killarney, may be bought for 4d. *per* pound; in Scotland, for 6d.; in Wales, for 1s.; and the price of a Thames fish is never less than 7s. and frequently 17s. and one guinea.

mon dressed north of the Tweed: but a London epicure cannot be too lavish of his abuse of it, though he probably forgets, that before it reaches the metropolis, it will have journeyed a distance of upwards of 300 miles, enveloped in ice, and, however firm to the touch, and beautiful to the eye, its proper flavor must be destroyed.

As I have unintentionally entered upon this subject, I think I cannot do better than pursue it a little further, and give you some account of the manner in which salmon are taken by angling. The rod for this purpose should be at least eighteen feet long, stout of course in proportion, and with a reel line of ninety yards in length; for though a salmon after being hooked seldom quits the stream far, and but rarely takes out any length of your line, still he sometimes will do it, and it is not always the case that the fisherman has a gravel patch or free range to follow him over, which makes that length of line necessary against every difficulty of situation. The reel for salmon fishing should always be a *plain* one, the multiplier having no power to wind him up as occasion may require: in fact, the latter will not stir a large fish, and the

chance is, that before you can move him the main pillar will break. The rod should be strong, and the two joints next the hand not too pliant; for as the line necessary for casting, when the fly is attached to it, is pretty heavy, should the rod play too much to the but, it would be found difficult to throw the fly out so as to fall neatly and light upon the water. All salmon flies, (I collect I am now speaking of North Wales) except the wasp and hornet, of which I shall give you an account presently, should be made to imitate dragon flies, being the only large ones that are seen playing about the rivers. Their bodies should be long and slender, made of floss silk, of blue, black, claret, and, in short, of various colors; some ribbed with black, and all with gold or silver plaited *wire*, not *twist*, for this is not sufficiently predominant in the water. As these flies have very long bodies, it is frequently better to extend the silk to the upper part of the hook, to make them appear longer than it would otherwise admit. The wings of all should not have too much feather in them, and those of most of them should be of various colors; as, for instance, a few fibres of the most close and fine feathers of the cock pheasant's tail, a little blue, purple, yel-

low, or gaudy colors of foreign birds, and some fibres of the grey feathers of a mallard. In order that the wings may lie flat on the back of the fly, when drawn through the water, you should not, in the making, extend them too far apart. The hackles for the legs should be black, red, or dun, or those that are red and black at the root; but the preference is generally given to the feathers from the saddle of the cock, because the fibres are stiffer, and the feather longer, which will enable you to make the body to any fulness you may desire.

Salmon are so fond of gaudy flies, that the fisherman can never be at a loss to please his fancy, be it ever so capricious. At the latter end of the season when salmon make up the rivers for spawning, the wasp or hornet is a capital fly. The wings are made from the fine fibres of the cock pheasant's tail; (I mention the word *fine*, because some of them are so wiry that they will not tie well together,) the body of yellow worsted, dyed fine wool or floss silk, ribbed with black, and made full, and a large red cock's hackle or saddle feather, black at the roots, wrapped several times under the but of the wings for legs. This is the method

of making salmon flies in North Wales; but as the DEE is the favorite river in that part of the country, and as it has a fine gravelly bed, probably the method is peculiar to it alone; I shall therefore add to this that which the fishermen pursue on the WYE, a river much more rapid and rocky. Accordingly, you are obliged to wade very far before you can arrive at the best streams; and, in doing this, you should, if a stranger, be extremely cautious, for one unlucky step might not only plunge you into a profound but an irremeable depth.

A salmon, as I have said before, seldom runs out much of your line, and even this only when you pull against him; at times he will be like a log, dull and stupid, and no *prudent* effort on your part can determine him to shew sport. You must, however, strive to effect this by casting stones to the further side of him, being careful not to let them fall too near, and only endeavouring to move him by disturbing the water; for, should you suddenly alarm him, he may, by an instant jerk, break all your tackle into atoms. The deepest and most rapid streams are the best catch for a

salmon; and the more powerful these are, the greater will be your difficulty in killing him; the largest I ever knew taken with a fly was in Scotland; he weighed fifty-four pounds and an half.

In South Wales, on the WYE, they chiefly use the buttern's hackle for wings, which consist of four; those near the head being somewhat longer, and placed at a very small distance from the others; the bodies, which are forked with four dark fibres of a mallard's feather, are of fine wool, dyed various colors, and mixed to please the fancy; the legs always of the dun cock's saddle feather, in the early part of the season; but towards the latter end they wing with the feather of a fork, or salmon-tailed kite, and the dark mottled red feather of a turkey, the body yellow, and a ginger saddle feather for legs.

In the WYE and the USK salmon are in season from the time they come up (March) till June, when they return to the sea. In most other countries the contrary is the case, and the time of spawning varied accordingly. The best hours for

angling for them are from six till nine in the morning, and between three and eight in the evening. A good breeze, and a clear water also, will greatly contribute to your diversion, and especially if the two elements be in opposition. I shall finish my letter by giving you some account of the flies made use of in Scotland; that, if ever you travel into those delightful regions, you may not be entirely destitute of local information. The wings of the first, called the Tartan-fly, are the dark speckled brown of a turkey's tail, mixed with twelve harls from the peacock's, six in each wing; the body, a mixture of every color you can imagine, forked with the dark fibres of a mallard's feather, and a blood-red cock's hackle over the whole: this is rather an extraordinary fly, and the body must be made with each color separate, beginning with bright yellow, and ending with black, neatly ribbed with gold twist, and the head of copper-colored mohair.

A second fly has the same feather for wings, only of a reddish cast; the body bright brown hair or fur of bear, mixed with gold-colored mohair, and

ribbed with gold, and two hackles, a black and a red one, a little larger, for legs, and the head of deep red mohair.

A third fly, called the black dog, and the most killing of all, has its wings of a blue heron's feather, mixed with red turkey; the body of lead-colored mohair, ribbed with gold, and a large black cock's hackle or saddle feather for legs; the head, a little dark green mohair and green silk. These flies are all made on a hook, (No. 1,) but decreasing in their full size regularly as they are placed. In making this last fly, take care to divide the wings with the gold twist, bringing it backwards and forwards three or four times betwixt them, and making it appear as much as possible about the head.

A fourth fly has its wings of the speckled feather of a kite or buzzard's wing; the body light blue hog's wool, and a little lead-colored mohair mixed; forked with four strips of the copper-colored feather of a mallard; a dark blue hackle for legs, and the head of the same color.

A fifth fly has its wings of the mottled grey feather

of a turkey's tail; the body copper-colored peacock's harl, and green plover's topping, ribbed with silver, forked with two long fibres of the tail feather of a cock pheasant: a dark grizzle hackle for legs, and made with dark red silk; these two flies are made on a hook, (No. 2.)

A sixth, called the golden fly, has its wings made from the feathers of the golden pheasant, the common pheasant, the parrot, peacock's harl from the tail, the turkey's mottled feather from the tail, and two blue mottled feathers from the jay, one placed on each side of the wings, with the mottled part downwards; the other feathers should be mixed equally alike, forming altogether a moderate sized wing: the body should be made of green silk, ribbed with gold, and a strong red cock's hackle, or saddle feather for legs, with the head of green mohair.

A seventh, called the silver fly, is made in the same way, only ribbed with silver, and a dun hackle for the legs; these last are made on a hook, (No. 3) and are taken from the middle of June till the latter end of August, in a fine clear water. After this period you must return to the former flies,

which, by making a little variation in their size, will never fail affording you diversion. I own, however, I am no great salmon-fisher myself, but this information comes from those whose long and unwearied pursuit in each of the countries above-mentioned, entitles it to the highest consideration and credit.

In his eagerness for food, a salmon has sometimes been known to take a large trout-fly, but very rarely to the advantage of the angler, and the only chance he has of securing him, is by throwing away the rod entirely, and thus suffering his strength to become so gradually exhausted, that his efforts to disengage himself are perfectly feeble and unavailing. I once knew an instance of this kind, where the fish was not finally made prize of until the following morning.

LETTER III.

Crickhowell, March.

YESTERDAY entered the principality, and have for the present fixed myself here. Nothing can be more enchanting than the approach to this little village; imbosomed in the midst of beauty, you feel, as it were, the warmest embrace of nature, and the luxuriant scenery, which on every side invites the attention, cannot fail of producing the most rapturous sensations, even in an indifferent breast. First appearances are not always conclusive evidence: thirty miles west of this nothing is more dreary; the mountains there are naked and barren, a rude pile of stones and mud is the only habitation, and a half-starved shepherd, more ignorant than the miserable flock which he attends, constitutes the sum of human felicity. I do not, however, recollect to have at any time been in a place more

happily situated than this: except towards the south, the valley is completely surrounded by lofty, and, for the most part, cultivated hills, the sides of which are variegated with a profusion of cottages, scattered in a pleasing irregularity; and in their gay appearance forming a lively contrast to the sombre hue of the rocky declivity above, and the enamelled verdure below. The air is particularly mild, and the climate as fine as you can imagine, so that, in point of vegetation, they are here a full fortnight earlier than you. Still, thus partially favored, a Welchman is incapable of estimating the value of his endowments; his mind, too grossly bigoted to prejudice, aspires not beyond his native mountains; happy in the listless enjoyment of vulgar experience, he seldom hazards it for more popular applause, and no attractions can induce him to forsake his stubborn pertinacity. I do not, however, mean to say there is no remedy for all this; a better system of education, and a more general intercourse with their neighbours, would eventually render the natives of CAMBRIA, if not a distinguished, at least a useful race; and probably restore them to that rank in society, which, since the days of the first Edward, they have been gradually losing.

You will probably tell me that the manners of a people change of necessity with their condition, and that every allowance should be made for a nation deprived of its freedom. I will readily grant you that the liberty of the subject is indispensably necessary to the grandeur of a state; but theirs was so rude and unlicensed, as scarcely to deserve the admiration of posterity; for with all their claim to patriotism, and to the remembrance of departed valor, the spot where perished the last brave champion of their rights, is left to the tradition of unlettered fancy, unmarked by any offering, civilized or rude. It appears, indeed, still more strange, that a people, whose pride of ancestry is proverbial, should not have endeavoured to preserve some trace of it pure and uncontaminated, and that the descendants of Tudor and Llewellen should so far forget their princely dignity as to court notoriety by grovelling in the gloomy recesses of ignorance and superstition! Had it not been for the vigilant endeavours of some northern adventurers, the estimation, which at present this country is in with its inhabitants, would still have retained a very negative appearance: the talent certainly they possessed, but to unfold the napkin which

concealed it, required either more trouble than suited their disposition, or what, perhaps, has greater probability, more knowledge than their capacity could comprehend. Strangers, however, are seldom admitted even upon terms of *reciprocal* advantage: jealous of their approach, their manners become torpid and forbidding; cold in advance, and as sudden in retreat, they yield to the slightest impulse of uneducated fancy, the voice of friendship is but a momentary echo, and gold the only compact which can fix their affections. Do not, however, misunderstand me; I have no wish to be lavish of abuse, nor apply the epithet of "toto divisos orbe" to a people amongst whom there are doubtless many worthy exceptions: these are times, I am sorry to say, in which the *main chance* has become the universal aim, and the present definition of an English *good* man has, I fear, more truth in it, than the generality of those compliments, which our polite opponents are so liberal in bestowing: but allow me for the present to close my portfolio, and take advantage of the change in the wind and weather.

Evening.

I left you in the morning to enter upon the object of my expedition, and from twelve till two had capital diversion: early in the day the wind was easterly, and the sun too bright and powerful; but the former getting round to the south, the latter was soon obscured in a host of cloud.

The fly on the water, when I began fishing, was a sort of red dun, and is the first of the season; I caught one with my landing-net, and found him exactly similar to some I had brought with me, and which are made thus: the body is of copper colored hog's fur from near the tail, and the wings either of a dark mottled red feather of a mallard, and the same colored hackle for legs, or a dark grizzle cock's hackle, simply over the whole, on a hook, (No. 6.) His wings lie close on his back, and from twelve till one, upon rapid streams, he will show good sport. After the departure of this, the next fly that appeared was the March-brown, or, what is generally termed in Wales, the cob-fly: he is much bigger than the last, and one of the best of

the season. These flies appear in large shoals, and at those times the water is perfectly alive. I should recommend every one before he attempts the artificial fly to catch a natural one, as their bodies vary so much in color, but this one in particular, in which respect he is a perfect camelion, but a most famous killing fly throughout the season, and made thus: his wings, which stand nearly upright, are from the feather of a hen-pheasant's wing, a good deal dappled, with a partridge's hackle wrapped twice round close under the but for legs; his body, which is pretty large, is made of a mixture of yellow camlet and the light brown fur of an hare's ear, about equal quantities of each, on a hook, (No. 6.) When this fly first comes on the water the fish instantly flock to the head of the stream, and scarce one out of thousands escapes their fury. It will materially assist your diversion, I think, if you use three flies of this description at the same time; one of a lighter color, another something sadder, and a third the exact color of the natural fly; for by throwing gently up the stream, and allowing yours to swim down with the other flies, a fish is more likely to be off his guard; and under such circumstances every dexterity of skill is required

to lure him into the snare. This fly will always take the largest fish, and it is as great a favourite on large rivers as the green drake is on smaller ones, so that whenever you observe it to come on, you may be very certain that nothing else will succeed.

Upon more attentively examining the fish I had taken, I found they were not in such good season as from their strength in the water I was led to suspect: their heads were large and black, and the bellies of a dusky ash color, very different from what the fish in this river usually present: I therefore think that those, which last autumn went up into the smaller brooks to deposit their spawn, are now returning, and will not probably for some weeks regain their excellence: the biggest of those I caught was sixteen inches long, and only weighed one pound and an half; their flavour when dressed too was equally bad, and the flesh both soft and watery.

When the head of a trout is fine, taper, and small, the gills of the deepest blood color, his shoulders thick and broad, his belly and his fins shining like gold, and his whole body firm to the

touch, you may then pronounce him to be in the finest season, and at such time is equal, if not superior, to any other fish whatever. But all rivers vary as to this particular, some being earlier and others later, and none, in fact, are *quite the thing* till the latter end of April or the beginning of May. The USK, however, and the DRIFFIELD, a river in Yorkshire, are much forwarder than any I am acquainted with, and in my opinion produce the best sport and the finest flavored trout; and, notwithstanding their difference in point of size, climate, and situation, the former being three times, and in many places four times as large as the latter, the same kind of fly usually appears on both at one time: I can only account for this by supposing it to arise from the course of each river being contiguous to a canal, and the soil of one nearly similar to that of the other: but such reasoning may be vague and contradictory: I would have you, therefore, receive it with caution, and adopt a more plausible philosophy.

Tuesday.

I have been chiefly employed to-day in making flies, for it blew a cold east wind in the morning, and some of the hills were likewise covered with snow, so that I did not care to venture out. It is not always a profitable thing for a stranger coming to this country to do, but I am so well acquainted with the Usk myself, that I can tell very nearly the time, and quality of every fly upon it; this is of the first importance, and saves both a world of trouble and expence. I have seen men come here with a book full of the smartest and most gaudy flies imaginable; to look at they were bewitching, and their effects were said to be more wonderful than the lamp of Aladdin! But what may kill on some rivers, here only alarms: and I have positively known a person try twenty different sorts without being once able to rise a single fish, till, his patience becoming quite exhausted, with an hearty exclamation, he sent fish, line, rod, tackle-maker, and all at once to the d--- l. I do not wish to arrogate any applause to myself on the occasion, but I once gave one of these gentry a fly of my own make,

and though he had been out two days before without taking a single fish, on the third he killed upwards of five and twenty large ones, and brought his fly safe home again: a pretty good specimen, I think, both of sport and dexterity, and shews you the necessity of being able to make your own fly. Another great consideration is, the opportunity it affords for the employment of those hours which would otherwise frequently hang heavy on your hands: in very wet weather, or whenever you feel yourself disposed to stay at home, I should always recommend you to devote some part of the day to this amusement. Many lazy fellows are content to take the "ipse dixit" of every one they meet as to the sort of fly at the time on the water, and keep *flogging* away for a whole hour, perhaps, without stirring a fish. With every sentiment of partiality for my brother sportsmen, I assure you, I must own, that I never found them over anxious to impart their knowledge, but on the contrary have had frequent cause to lament the reverse: as this, however, may be very properly termed the age of quizzing, I am more willing to attribute such trifling misprisions to fashionable levity, than re[illegible] ill-nature, and where a debt thus contracted n[illegible]

be so easily liquidated, the best plan is to credit the account, with a promise of repayment the first favourable opportunity.

Pray let me know in your next when I may expect you. I think in a fortnight the fishing will be excellent, and that also will be the best time for our visit to the Wyre; for, as in salmon fishing, you are obliged to wade a considerable depth to secure any diversion, the further the spring is advanced, and the more settled the weather, the less liable you are to be affected by the sudden changes of heat and cold.

LETTER IV.

March 30.

Your letter, my dear G------, has caused me the most lively anxiety; and, to say that I am disappointed in not seeing you, would be but the expression for a common and every-day occurrence; I am indeed mortified, for I had been long planning how I might best entertain you. Much, however, as I regret the absence of your society, the event which has caused it encreases my concern; and though I would fain endeavour to offer you some consolation under so severe an affliction, I feel that I am, perhaps, acting with greater kindness, in suffering the source of it to flow unrestrained. The loss of friends is a misfortune at all times to be deplored, and more particularly when the union has been cemented by habit and experience; it is after such a separation, that the heart feels itself

truly isolated; and, for a moment absorbed in past recollections, yields to every impulse of frightful despondency. Still, if any thing could blunt the edge of calamity, it must have been in that progressive decline, which has finally terminated in irrevocable dissolution. It only remains, therefore, to pay that tribute to the memory of departed worth, which the consciousness of existing virtue so warmly vindicated, and to embalm so bright an example will best alleviate the loss of a companion, who no longer charms.

Since I last wrote to you, my sport has been tolerably good, and I have annexed a table which will best describe it. The days I have put down are those on which I went out early, and returned late; of course whole ones, and unconnected with others, when I was out, perhaps, for no more than a couple of hours. The new fly, you will observe, is peculiar to this and a great part of next month: he differs materially from the last, and is best taken on shallow streams, and only in cold weather; this also is what should never escape you, that the browns are taken on warm gloomy days, and the blues on cold windy ones. The wings of this blue

dun fly are from the feather of a starling's wing; the body of light blue fur, mixed with a little yellow mohair, a fine blue hen's hackle over it for legs, and forked with two fibres of the same—the hook 7 or 8.

I would have you recollect, that you must always endeavour to suit the color of your fly to the state of the water: when clear or bright, use a light one, *vice versa* when gloomy, and, when muddy, something more of an orange or gold color. You will, probably, have been advised always to keep your face towards the sun: this I do not recommend; it is utterly impossible for a person to distinguish when a fish rises in such a situation; and to prevent your shadow from falling in the direction of the line in which you are throwing, is the object, I imagine, you are to attain: this may be done by fishing a stream upwards, downwards, or sideways, as you find it answer; and, indeed, by a little management, you may always contrive to have the sun in a better situation than immediately fronting you. The length of your line must be regulated according to the size of the river, and your own skill in throwing it, recollecting never to use

a longer one than is absolutely necessary: do not therefore, to appear clever, or something out of the common way, toil yourself to no good purpose by casting to a distance: you not only stand a chance of getting entangled in trees and bushes, but if you once become at all fatigued, your line, instead of falling gently and at full stretch, perhaps doubles itself, and the flies catch in your hat: this, you must confess, is sad clumsy work, and not only frightens the fish, but is frequently apt to disturb that patience, which you will find the greatest demand for, even in less critical situations. Nothing is neater than to see a fly thrown well, and in a workmanlike manner; but to attain this requires much time and experience, and all that was ever written on the subject is perfectly immaterial. Notwithstanding, however, the inefficacy of such instruction, one or two hints may not be amiss: keep your eye on the exact point where you wish the fly to drop; and, if you should not accomplish your object the first time, do not *immediately*, by an angry effort, attempt it again, but draw your line very gently towards you in a circular direction, till within a proper distance, and then try what you can do a second time, always

throwing above where you have seen, or think it likely that a fish will rise; and never drag your fly up to a fish, except in very rapid streams indeed. When you rise a fish two or three times without hooking him, you may be certain there is something about your fly he does not like; it is either too large, too small, or what is most probable, not of the exact color; for though it is an easy matter to have your wings correct, it is somewhat otherwise with the body part, and this is the principal attraction: in such a case, you must change the color of it until you find it answer your expectations; and, having acquired this advantage, never resign it for one more precarious. The large whirling dun, which appears next month, is a fly that I have taken more fish with on the Usk, than any other whatever; and from his first coming on, to the end of the season, is very destructive; he is the least difficult too, of all others to imitate, and the handsomest when made; his wings are from the feather of a starling's wing, with a partridge's hackle for legs; his body either ash color of the down of a fox-cub, or orange-colored mohair, and blue squirrel's fur mixed, this latter being very prevalent at the commencement of the season: the larger

sort are made on a hook, (No. 7,) and the smaller, which is perfectly similar, except in size, but does not appear till July, on No. 10. This fly, after and during a heavy shower, is admirable, and too much cannot be said in his praise.

A good sportsman will never take a fish of less weight than a pound: I am well aware what a volley of objections you will bring against this, and tell me, perhaps, that with you a trout of that size is much beyond the average mark: but recollect that I am speaking of the Usk, and similar rivers, where five out of six that you take are comparatively much larger. I fear, however, that in this place the example of one solitary individual is not likely to benefit much, especially when the *silver* hook is more destructive than the *steel* one.

Poaching has of late years risen to a height almost incredible, and it is hard to determine which deserves the most severe condemnation---the open effrontery of the thief, or the unblushing impudence of the receiver: if a person can afford, or rather can *stoop* to buy game, he richly deserves to pay dearly for it; and I am only astonished that

these *nominal* gentry experience such lenient usage. It is no uncommon thing, I assure you, in this country, to sit down to moor-game in July, and partridges in August, and at the tables of those people, whose *profession* was intended to support, not violate the law: a good house, and a good larder, however, are luxuries which they possess almost as an inheritance; for, go wherever you will, the two best in the place generally belong to the parson and the attorney. It is not always, indeed, that the former is a sportsman, and under that plea he may shelter himself from the charge of incorrectness; but I look upon the encouragement given to vice, in any shape, to be totally irrelevant with the sacred functions of the cloth, and, as such, cannot be justified. Where then, I hear you say, am I in this case to get game, for it would be monstrous hard for me to suffer a punishment inflicted only upon such as TANTALUS? If you are no sportsman yourself, the amusement of shooting or hunting cannot be an object to you; and, provided you receive presents now and then from your neighbours who are, you obtain, I should think, the end of your desires. This, in a Christian-like country, you may always do; for

it is the interest, not only of the lord of the manor, but of every other gentleman fond of sporting, to prevent, by those honourable means, the consequence of illicit ones.

I recollect a trick that was practised upon a terrible poacher once, in the North of England, which, though not perfectly justifiable at the time, nevertheless, in the end, proved of serious advantage to all parties. There was a country-fellow, who had long been suspected of committing sad depredations in this way; and though the most notorious character, could never absolutely be caught in the fact. It happened that, at a justice-meeting in the neighbourhood where he lived, he was present upon some parish business, and, after getting it settled, his dissolute manner of living was severely reprobated by his superiors in office, when he utterly denied all knowledge of what was so rigidly laid to his charge. At this, one of the quorum, more sharp than his brethren, or indeed than that learned body generally are, slipt out unobserved, and soon returned with a partridge, which, by some means, he contrived to put into the fellow's coat pocket, and then, *himself* taking

up the matter, and more strictly charging him with mal-practices, boldly asserted, that he had been seen shooting that morning, and begged he might be searched! Imagination can best paint the scene that followed---the man, on this evidence, was absolutely convicted; and only on the most solemn assurances of contrition and amendment, excused spending his Christmas within the walls of York Castle: from that time he became a good subject, and to this hour firmly believes it was the work of some supernatural being, to turn him from his evil ways!

TABLE OF SPORT.

When.	Wind.	Water.	Weather.	Fly.	Number.
March 5.	S. W.	High.	Mild.	G. A.	27
Do. 8.	N.	Fine.	Cold.	1.	17
Do. 10.	S.	Clear.	Bright.	G. 1.	20
Do. 11.	S. W.	Fine.	Cloudy.	A.	30
Do. 12.	N. W.	Fine.	Cold.	G. 1.	19
Do. 14.	W.	Clear.	Cloudy.	A.	25
Do. 15.	N. W.	Clear.	Showers.	1. A.	20
Do. 19.	N.	High.	Cold.	1.	20
Do. 21.	S. W.	Fine.	Gloomy.	1. A.	30

LETTER V.

April.

No river that I am acquainted with is equal to the Usk, for the number and variety of its streams, nor would there be any better, if it was properly preserved. Its bed is in many places of a fine loose gravel, and in others of the most obstinate rock, so that in one day's fishing you will meet with two or three varieties of trout. This, in a great measure, accounts for the early season of some, and the contrary of others, the warmth of the gravel bringing them much sooner to perfection than the cold nature of the rock. Since the time of Admiral G------, who rented the Usk from the Duke of Beaufort, it has been miserably neglected, and, except for about the space of a quarter of a mile, which the present occupier keeps to himself, is regularly netted throughout the season. The

Admiral was a strange character, but the singularity of his manners gave a brighter polish to the goodness of his heart. His house was open at all times and to all people, and a person was only a stranger whilst he chose to continue so; there was even some difficulty in achieving this, and you could not more seriously offend him than by refusing to partake in his offers of hospitality, or rather, I may say, by absenting yourself a moment from his table during your residence in the country. When alone, however, his usual companions, if I may be allowed to class *all* under that term, were an old maiden sister, half a dozen dogs and cats, and occasionally a fat pig: *an evening party* of this description is not frequently to be met with; each had an allotted place, and by way of conferring greater dignity upon the favorite of EPICURUS, he was honored with a velvet cushion. A variety of instruments do not always produce harmony of sound; the present instance was a lamentable confirmation of it, and, I believe, only on these occasions was the Admiral's society termed a *bore*. It will easily be imagined that such a disposition amongst such a people was frequently taken advantage of, and of those of his guests most assiduous

in their attentions, was one; who, for a number of years, never absented himself from his table but once, and that was to meet him at a neighbouring inn. The sincerity of their friendship, however, is not to be doubted: it was long and mutual; and the chain that connected it has been deprived of a link, which neither time nor circumstances can ever replace.

I have been a good deal amused this last day or two with the applications of several people asking me for fish: I was at first inclined to think they were quizzing, and did it merely for the sake of seeing if I had had any diversion: this I soon found to be a wrong speculation, for the appeal was quickly made on the score of a sister, or daughter more frequently, ill in a consumption, and even to that extent, that ten good Samaritans would have had ample opportunity of administering to their wants. Upon recollection, it occurred to me, that on my first coming here, I had given two or three fish to a poor unfortunate looking creature, who at the time said something about a consumption. It was rather lucky that this patient was so happily restored, for I afterwards found,

that the more fish I distributed, the more numerous was my list of invalids, which, that empiricism might not suffer at my hands, finally obliged me to relinquish the profession.

I have already given you an account of the different flies which have so far made their appearance, and I shall now offer you some instructions in respect to the making of one, though it is a task on paper very difficult to demonstrate; and I should recommend you, previous to the attempt, if possible, to obtain some ocular advantage. First then we will suppose all the necessary apparatus to be ready before you*; silk well waxed; a length of gut previously steeped in hot water to stretch and straighten; your feather stripped neatly from the quill, so as not to separate the fibres; body colors well-mixed; a hackle for the legs, and a proper sized hook, with a neat pair of strong, but very small pointed scissars, to cut away the superfluous parts. Take the hook, the bend towards the hand, and the barbed part underneath, and

* Your silk should always be waxed with shoemaker's wax, and the point of your gut singed off in the flame of a candle, to prevent its slipping.

one end of the silk betwixt the finger and thumb of your left hand, and whip it neatly round the top of the shank three or four times: then lay the smaller end of the gut on the under side, and fasten it well and strong to the hook: your feather must now be laid with great care, with the roots downwards, and also on its outside, upon the top of the shank, leaving so much of the points extending the opposite way, as are proper for the length of wing: this fasten well, and observe, that no part of the feather whatever must be suffered to lie on the under side. I would advise you now to rest a little, as your hand is will most probably feel cramped after having so long held in such a uniform position; cut away a great part of the root of the feather, not exactly at a point, but gradually sloping it: then, with your hook in the same position, force the feather for the wings upwards with the point of the thumb of your right hand, and holding it down with the left, divide it equally into two parts, and pass the silk through the division, forwards and backwards, bringing it again underneath, and whipping it over the butt of the wings twice, so as to cause them to stand upright, or otherwise, as you wish: then take your hackle for

the legs, one side of which must be stripped off and, indeed, part of the other, to the point where you wish to fasten it, close under the but of the wings; which having done, bring it twice round very close, and then fasten.

The most difficult part in the making of a fly is now got rid of; you may rest again, and cut away the two superfluous parts of the hackle, to the length of the body of the fly; then taking the dubbing or body stuff betwixt the finger and thumb of your left hand, and the hook in the same position; take the silk fresh waxed with the right, and twist it so that the dubbing may spin itself round it; which, when it has done, whip about to the length of two-thirds of the shank, and plucking away the remainder, if there be any still left, to the bare silk, fasten all well and tight, and cut away the silk. Your fly is now made, and, after disposing the body with the point of a needle to the most exact resemblance of nature you can, will kill, if properly used, on any river. The only additional information I can give you is, never to let your body, legs, or wings, be too long, or in too great a quantity; the length of the former

I have already described, and the others should never be allowed to extend beyond the bend of the hook: the middle part of a hackle is also the best for legs, which should never be cut to remedy any inconvenience in point of length.

The best plan of discerning the real color of the body of a fly is, when you are by the water-side, to catch two or three of different sorts, and deposit them in a small tin box, which you must carry about you purposely for this use; then, at your leisure, holding them up betwixt your eye and the sun, you will readily distinguish the exact shades, and more decidedly imitate them, by first mixing your dubbing, and steeping it in water, being cautious to make it resemble the under part of the fly, which is generally of a less bright and sadder complexion than the upper, and which the fish are solely attracted by. An expert hand will finish about a dozen of these flies in an hour; but, probably, one less accustomed to the business will find some difficulty in completing six.

There are two other methods of making flies peculiar to a particular sort, and which are denomi-

nated hackle flies. The wings of these are made of an hackle, simply twisted round the top of the shank, or to cover the whole of the body; fasten your gut well to the hook as before mentioned, and lay the hackle, the outside being uppermost, and on the top of the hook, with the root or stronger point towards the bend, and whip your silk twice round, and afterwards the hackle as often, which fasten, and release the fibres of it, which may be entangled, with the point of a needle: cut away to the length of the body, and spin your stuff for that purpose round your silk, and carry it down neatly to what you think a sufficient length; fasten well, and cut away the remainder. This is one sort; and the only difference in making the other is, after the hackle is fastened in, to form the body of your fly, and carry the hackle down to the extremity of it, and fasten as before: this last is the proper method of imitating all flies whose wings lie flat on the back, and do not, like some others, stand upright.

Should you ever be at a loss to know what fly is the most likely to kill when there are none on the water, shake the bushes or branches of trees by the

side of the river, and some one of those which drop from them, will be certain of directing you, and by floating two or three down the streams, and watching their progress, you will, most likely, soon be satisfied of which is the favourite. There is, however, some part of the day when a fish cannot be tempted to stir; the people here say, that he is then *asleep*: but how any thing, which is for ever in motion, can enjoy such a blessing, must be determined by the tenets of that philosophy which, I imagine, is peculiar to CAMBRIA alone. You will best prepare yourself, I think, against any such trying situation, by comparing the state of the weather to-day, with what it was yesterday; if similar, then depend upon the fish feeding about the same hour; for on mild calm days, there is little or no variation in the time of the appearance of the different flies, a brisk wind or a shower of rain only causing them to come on earlier.

When a trout leaves his winter quarters in the brooks, and enters upon a wider range in the rivers, he is at first shy of wandering far from his hold, lying constantly in wait, in one particular spot,

for all the food that comes within his reach. After a little refreshment in this way, and cleansing himself from the many impurities he had collected since the autumn, he ventures by degrees out of the deep still water, into that where there is a little stronger current; till by such changes continually gaining strength and confidence, he boldly faces the most rapid streams. It is not here, however, where he hopes to protect himself, if caught by the art of the angler, but instantly running out your line, with the swiftness of a sky-rocket, attempts to battle all the efforts of his enemy, either beneath the roots of an old tree, or the projecting corner of a rock; and, if not particularly cautious, he will prove himself more than a match for you, either by twisting your line round the roots, or separating it against the sharp edge of the rock. This must be prevented, if possible, before he runs out your line too far; and, in such a case, keep your rod perfectly perpendicular, or rather with the but extending out of the exact direction, so that the whole play of the fish may bear principally on the point; and do not be over-anxious to have a sight of him; it is enough for you that you have a hold of him, and, by patiently humouring him, first letting him go out, then

gently drawing him back, you will soon render all further efforts, on his part, fruitless and unavailing: but this is so happily described by the muse of THOMSON, that I shall take the liberty of referring to him on the occasion.

> But should you lure
> From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots
> Of pendent trees, the monarch of the brook,
> Behoves you then to ply your finest art.
> Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly;
> And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft
> The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.
> At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun
> Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death,
> With sullen plunge. At once he darts along,
> Deep struck, and runs out all the lengthened line;
> Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,
> The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode;
> * And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,
> Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand,
> That feels him still, yet to his furious course
> Gives way, you, now retiring, following now
> Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage:
> Till floating broad upon his breathless side,
> And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore
> You gaily drag your unresisting prize.

* The poet here has unfortunately committed an error, for when a fish "flies aloft," or in other words, leaps to any considerable height out of the water, he is seldom "deep struck;" and one or two such efforts are generally sufficient to aid his escape.

LETTER VI.

I FINISHED my last letter to you, my dear G-----, with a description of the best method of killing a trout, and I wish I could equally instruct you in the mode of dressing one. Your old acquaintance, Mrs. Glasse, however, can supply the deficiency; and as you have achieved what she thinks the most material point, under her auspices you cannot fail of final gratification. The best trout I ever ate, were those caught in the USK, the DRIFFIELD river in Yorkshire, and a lake at HACKNESS near SCARBRO'; the two former kinds are very similar both as to size and appearance, but the latter are much less, and of a totally different variety: they seldom weigh above six ounces, and are of a silvery whiteness; but their flavor, when dressed, is superior to all others. It is somewhat remarkable, that the

fish taken in the very brook from which this lake is fed, and, in fact, whose course is directly through it, should not only be very inferior in taste, but much larger in size: as there is a river of considerable magnitude near, the intercourse betwixt it and the brook may, in some measure, account for what cannot happen to the lake, as the locks at each extremity prevent any communication with other unprofitable streams.

The method I have hitherto observed, of describing the various flies in each letter, I will, for your sake as well as my own, now get rid of, and give you an account of the best I am acquainted with in this. It is but a dull repetition of nearly similar terms; and if the amusement was not more animating than the description, I should much doubt its having any adherents. These flies I shall divide into five classes, of blues, browns, reds, yellows, and palmers. In the table, or diary, which will occasionally accompany my letters, you will at once observe the sport I have met with, and the particular flies that have encreased it; and as each of these will be either numbered or lettered in the page where it is described, the reference

will be easily made. There may be some, perhaps, I may never have occasion to refer to, but they are not the less useful on that account; for though only partially employed on this river, to my own knowledge they are very general favourites on others. If, therefore, you calculate upon the success of any particular fly, you will lament the error; for, except the green drake, this partiality attaches itself to none. I shall now merely preface my future remarks by adding, that, accordingly as the season advances, your flies must both decrease in size and in fullness of color; and that those which kill in the latter part of one month, will be found to answer the same purpose, in the early part of the day, at the beginning of the following, and if you are determined upon fishing the year round, for August, September, October, and November, you must look back to May, April, March, and February.

CLASS I.

BLUES.

1. Is called the blue dun fly, and appears about the beginning of March, continuing till the latter end of April; his wings are from the feather of a starling's wing, the body of any light blue fur, mixed with a little yellow mohair, a fine blue hen's hackle over the body for legs, and forked with two fibres of a blue cock's hackle—hook (No. 7 or 8,) according as the water is high or low, and is taken from 12 till 2 on cold gloomy days.

2. Is called the spider or gravel fly, and appears in warm weather, about the latter end of April, continuing until the second week in May. His wings are from the feather of a wood-cock out of the but of the wing; the body of lead-colored silk, and a black hen's hackle for legs, the hook (8 or 9,) and is taken the whole day through.

3. Is called the black gnat, and appears about the same time as No. 2, continuing to the end of

May. His wings are made of a dark blue hackle, and the body of an ostrich's feather; the hook (9,) and may be used on cold stormy days.

4. Is called the larger whirling dun, and appears about the same time as the above, continuing at least three weeks. His wings are from the blue feather of a starling's wing; his body of blue squirrel's fur, and yellow martern's fur mixed, varied occasionally with orange colored mohair; and a partridge's hackle for legs. (Hook 7 or 8.) This is a famous fly from about 10 till 2, especially if the day be cold and dark; his wings stand nearly upright on his back, and, taken altogether, is, in my opinion, the best fly that appears.

5. Is called the iron blue fly, appears at the same time with No. 3, and continues to the middle of June. His wings are from a dark blue feather of a hen, that grows on the body under the wing; the body of very dark crimson-coloured silk, with a sooty blue hackle over the whole, and forked with two fibres of a blue cock's hackle; his wings must be made, to stand upright, on a hook, (No. 9,) and may be used with great success from 11 till 3.

6. Is called the black caterpillar, and is a good fly for the first fortnight in May; his wings are from the blue feather of a jay, or starling's wing; the body of an ostrich's feather, and a black hackle over the whole. Should the sun disappear, after a bright hot morning, he will be found to answer very well, and is made on a hook (No. 7.)

7. Is called the sky-colored blue, and is in season from the latter end of May to the middle of July. This is a very neat curious little fly, and cannot be made too carefully; his wings are from a pale blue hen's feather, or one that grows under the wing of a wood pidgeon, made to stand nearly upright; the body of light blue fur, and pale yellow mohair mixed, forked the color of his wings, and a light hackle of a dirty ash color for legs, made on a hook, (No 8.) and takes well from 7 o'clock in the morning till sun-set.

8. Is called the violet fly, and is in season from the last week in May to the second in June. His wings, which are perfectly upright, are from the feather of the larger tom-tit's tail; the body of dark purple and crimson silk well mixed; a dark

blue hackle wrapped twice under the but of the wings for legs, and forked with the same: is a good fly in deep still water in the afternoon, and made on a hook (No. 8.)

9. Is called the blue gnat, and is taken from the latter end of June till August; his wings are made with a pale blue hackle, and his body of any light blue fur, and yellow mixed, on a hook, (No. 9.)

10. Is called the little pale blue, and may be used from the middle of August to the latter end of September. His wings, which stand nearly upright, are from the feather of a sea swallow: his body of very pale blue and yellow mixed, forked with the color of his wings, and a light-blue hen's hackle over the whole: a great favourite with graylings, and will kill well from ten till three in the afternoon; hook (No. 9.)

CLASS II.

BROWNS.

A. Is called the March brown, and in this country the cob-fly: his wings are from the feather of a hen pheasant's wing, a good deal dappled; the body of yellow camlet, and the light part of an hare's ear well mixed; a partridge's hackle for legs, forked with two strips of a dark mallard's feather, and made on a hook (No. 6,) with his wings nearly upright. In warm weather he appears about the first week in March, and continues all the month of April, and may be used from 11 till 1, at the beginning, and from that hour till 2 afterwards, with great success. These flies come down in large shoals, and are such determined favourites, that at those times nothing else will tempt a fish to rise. The whole river appears perfectly alive, and the extravagant motions and repeated attempts to satisfy the natural cravings of appetite, is not to be described, and can only be felt by the experienced and complete sportsman.

B. Is called the cow-dung fly, and continues for a month, from the last week in March. His wings, which lie flat on his back, are made from a feather out of the wing of a land-rail; his body of dirty lemon-colored mohair, with a hackle the same color for legs, on a hook, (No. 7:) he must only be used when driven upon the water by strong winds.

C. Is called the stone fly, and in some countries the May-fly. He appears about the middle of April, and continues to the end of May. His wings, which lie nearly flat on his back, are from the dark mottled feather of a cock pheasant's tail; the body of bear's dun hair, mixed with a little brown and yellow camlet, but so placed that it may be more brown towards the wings, and yellow towards the tail; a dun cock's hackle for legs, and ribbed with brown and yellow silk twisted together, on a hook (No. 4 or 5.)

On some rivers this fly is used naturally; thus: you must first collect a number of them, which are easily found underneath the stones by the sides of rivers, and put them into a tin box large enough

to hold a score or two, or a horn perforated so as to let in the air, and which will hang to the button of your coat, without inconvenience. Your line for this purpose should not be more than half as long again as your rod, with a single strong length of gut, and a hook (No. 6.) Draw the fly on behind the shoulders, bringing up the point of the hook out towards the head, throw it gently up the sides of the stream, and let it swim down, or play upon the water, in the manner best calculated to attract; be very cautious also in casting you do not get rid of the fly, which is exceeding tender, and requires great art in the management. In the height of the season this fly is a wonderful favourite; and as it seldom ventures far from the shore, you cannot be at a loss to know the proper method of using it.

D. Is called the [illegible], or green tail, and is seldom to be [illegible] very warm weather, but [illegible] second week in April, and [illegible] than ten days. [illegible] made of the [illegible] feather of a [illegible], the body of the darker fur of a [illegible], and a grizzle hackle for legs,

on a hook. (No. 8.) You may use this fly from about 7 in the morning to the time when you see the March brown and others come on, and for an hour after 4 again in the evening. His wings lie flat on his back, and he flutters a good deal on his first alighting upon the water, when he drops his eggs, which are of a green color, and from whence he derives his name; he may therefore be made either with or without a green hurl of a peacock's feather wrapped twice round at the extremity of the body.

E. Is called the fern fly, and continues for a month, from the middle of June. His wings are made from the dusky feather of a woodcock's wing; his body very slender, of orange-colored silk or mohair, with a hackle of the same kind for legs, on a hook, (No. 5 or 6,) and may be used the whole day through.

F. Is called the latter stone fly, and may be seen in great quantities, covering the stones by the river side, from the middle of July to the first week in August; his wings are made of the hackle feather of a brown hen, which is of a gold or

amber color at the points, and the body of mole and water rats fur mixed, very small; the hook (No. 10 or 11,) and is best used early in the morning, and from 6 till dusk again in the evening.

CLASS III.

REDS.

G. Is called the red fly, and is the first of the season; coming on about the middle of February, and remaining till the latter end of March. His wings are made either from the dark mottled brown feather of a mallard, or a dirty grizzle hackle of a cock; if the first be used, a red hackle must be wrapped close under the but for legs; the body is of copper-colored hog's fur near the tail, which is much preferable to red squirrel's fur, and the hook (No. 6.)

H. Is called the shorn fly, and is in season for about a month, from the second week in May. This fly has four wings, the upper ones of a dusky brown, and those underneath of a fine transparent blue; he is chiefly to be found in meadows, and

on the branches of the willow; and for the last fortnight that he remains with us, is more killing than any other fly whatever. His wings are made of a dark red cock's hackle that is black at the roots, and his body of a peacock's harl, on a hook (No. 6.)

I. Is called the orl fly, and is in season from the latter end of May to the end of June. His wings are made of a dark grizzle cock's hackle, and his body of a peacock's harl, worked with dark crimson-colored silk, on a hook (No. 6.) This is a good fly, particularly after a heavy shower, when the water is a little muddy: I have even taken fish with this, and the larger whirling dun, when the Usk was literally so thick, as to astonish the weak mind of a common performer.

K. Is called the button fly, or by some the Welshman's button. He is rather a difficult fly to make, from his shape, which is nearly round, and from whence he derives his name. His wings are made from the red feathers of a partridge's tail; his body of peacock's harl, and a black hackle for legs, on a hook (No. 7,) the shank of which

should be shortened, to enable you to make a more perfect imitation. It is generally in season from the first to the last week in June; but I have sometimes known him to continue no longer than two days, as the slightest storm of thunder or lightning totally banishes him for the season. This fly, however, to do the most execution, should be used naturally in the following manner;—Your rod must be at least twenty feet long, and of more than common substance; so that if you hook a large fish, which is generally the case, you may throw him out over your head in an instant: your tackle must, of course, be in other respects proportionably strong. During the continuance of these flies, they may be found in great quantities on the willow and hazle bushes: put one, or sometimes a couple on a hook, (No. 7,) in the same manner as I have said of the stone fly, and keeping yourself as much concealed as possible behind the bushes, just let out sufficient line to reach the water at the full extent of your rod. A fish will either take your bait the instant he perceives it, or keep following it for some minutes; in which latter case, you must not expect to deceive him, for the weather is, most probably, bright and sultry, and every

motion of your rod awakens his suspicions; the best plan will be, to leave him, and try another place; previously, however, throwing in two or three flies, to pave the way for better success. In this manner you may use the cock-chafer and large flesh-fly, which are equally killing, and provokingly tantalizing.

L and M are two flies, called the red spinners, which come down about the middle of June, and continue for two months. After a hot sultry day, when fish have been perfectly immoveable, these flies, towards evening, will be found very attractive; and, under such circumstances, may be used till dusk, particularly upon large rivers. The wings of the one sort are made of the dingy copper-colored feather of a mallard; his body of squirrel's fur, ribbed with gold twist; a fine red hackle over the whole, and forked with two fibres of the same. The wings of the other spinner are made from the feather of a starling's wing; the body of dull red mohair, ribbed with gold twist, a fine red hackle over the whole, and forked as before---the hooks (No. 7 or 8.)

N and O. Are two ant flies, called the black and red ant; they appear about the middle of June, if the weather be very sultry, and continue for three weeks or a month. The wings of the red sort are from the feather of a starling's wing; the body of brown peacock's harl, with a fine ginger hackle, wrapped twice under the but for legs. The wings of the black are of a fine transparent sky blue; but as no feather is to be had exactly similar to the color, I would either use no wing, or otherwise the feather of a wood pigeon; the body is made of a black ostrich's feather, and a black hackle over the whole. These two flies are made on a hook, (No. 8.) and, if used skilfully, are very destructive; the best time is from 11 in the morning till 6 in the evening; and the weather most favourable should be hot and gloomy. There are two smaller sorts of this species, which appear about the middle of August, and continue till the latter end of September: they are made exactly in the same way; that is, with the body larger towards the tail, and less in proportion towards the wings; and the hook (No. 9 or 10.)

CLASS IV.

YELLOWS.

P. Is called the sally fly; he is very small, of a dirty yellow color, and generally appears about a fortnight or ten days before the green drake, which prepares the fish for his reception; his wings are made of the dirty white hackle feather of a cock dyed yellow; and his body of the same colored fur or silk, with the hackle wrapped over the whole---hook (No. 8.) I never found this fly to do any good, and therefore only mention it as one of those which regulates the season of fly fishing.

Q. Is called the green drake, May fly, or yellow cadow; he generally appears about the third week in May, and seldom continues longer than the first in June; during which time, from ten in the morning till evening, a man may have better sport, and take more fish than with any other fly whatever. There are three methods of making this fly, each of which I shall describe, and leave it to the

angler himself to use that he most approves. First, His wings are made of the feather of a mallard's breast, dyed yellow; his body of any pale dirty blue-colored silk, ribbed with copper color of the same, a partridge or bittern's hackle for legs, with two wrappings of a brown peacock's harl for the head, and forked with two hairs from a fitchat's tail: a second is to make it as a hackle fly, with the same feather, and the body of seal's fur, forked, ribbed, and headed as before: a third, and, I believe, peculiar to Hampshire, is made with the smaller dyed feathers of the same, each being to represent a wing, and so placed, that the points may incline towards each other, nearly meeting, in an upright position; this last is a neat fly, and should be made on a hook one size smaller than the other two, which are (No. 5 or 6); his body is the same as the second, and his legs, &c. as those of the first.

The hackle fly, however, is my favourite: and I have frequently found that fish have taken this, and refused the two others, especially on rapid streams. During the continuance of the drake, and from the time he first appears in a morning,

it is useless to try any thing else; a more destructive insect, for the purpose to which he is suited, cannot be found; and, at such times, it is even scarcely possible for the greatest blockhead upon earth not to reap the fruit of his exertions. Most writers upon angling have, however, given to this fly a wider range of water than is absolutely the case; for I never knew an instance, in my experience, where he was taken, *generally*, on any large river; but his execution has been principally confined to those of a less size, and more particularly brooks: in fact, it is a very rare thing to see them on a river; and, where they are almost perfect strangers, I need scarcely point out the absurdity of their being favourites. From about two or three streams, perhaps, from the immediate communication of any brook, they may be taken, but more than this I can positively refute; and affirm that their excellence is individually confined to brooks.

R. Is called the grey drake, and generally appears a few days before the departure of the above. The wings of this fly are from the grey feather of a mallard, made to stand very upright; the legs of

a grizzle cock's hackle, and his body, which is very long, of white colored goat or camel's hair, ribbed with copper-colored silk, and forked with three hairs from a fitchat's tail: the head must be made of the brown harl of a peacock, and the hook (No. 5.) The habits of this differ very materially from those of the preceding fly, being more partial to canals and wide rivers, and seldom frequenting brooks. If it should happen that your sport has been bad in the day, this fly, when in season, will always be a good reserve for a couple of hours in the evening, and your basket will then contain a good store of large fish. He must be used singly, and thrown so as to fall perfectly perpendicular upon the water, which is his natural method, and keeps the fish so alive to his appearance, that they frequently leap half a yard from the surface, to secure him; and, in the height of the season, they will be no less eager for the artificial fly.

CLASS V.

PALMER WORMS, OR FLIES.

S. Is called the black palmer, and is made of a black ostrich's feather for the body, ribbed with silver twist, and a black cock's hackle over the whole.

T. is called the brown palmer; his body is made of amber-colored mohair, ribbed with silver and gold twist; and a red cock's hackle over the whole.

V. Is called the golden palmer; and his body is made of orange-colored mohair, ribbed with the copper-colored harl of a peacock and gold twist, and a red cock's hackle over it.

W. Is called the red palmer; the body of this is made of dark red-colored mohair, ribbed with gold twist, and a blood-red cock's hackle over it. The size of the hook upon which all these flies are

made, is (No. 6,) and if the water be very high, one size larger. They may be used at all times throughout the year, with various success; and, in some countries, will kill in preference to any other fly; but, on the Usk, I never found them such general favourites as to give them so decided a character for excellence.

G. Red fly, from the middle of February to the latter end of March.

1. March blue, from the first week in March to the end of April.

A. March brown, from the first week in March to the end of April.

B. Cow-dung fly, from the third week in March to the end of April.

C. Stone fly, from the middle of April to the end of May.

D. Granam fly, or green tail, from the second to the last week in April.

2. Spider or gravel fly, from the last week in April to the second in May.

3. The black gnat, from the last week in April to the end of May.

4. Larger whirling dun, from the last week in April to the end of May.

5. Iron blue fly, from the last week in April to the middle of June.

6. Black caterpillar, from the first to the third week in May.

H. The shorn fly, from the second week in May to the second in June.

P. Yellow sally fly, from the first to the third week in May.

Q. The green drake, from the third week in May to the first in June.

R. The grey drake, from the third week in May to the third in June.

I. The orl fly, from the last week in May to the end of June.

7. Sky-colored blue, from the last week in May to the middle of July.

8. Violet fly, from the last week in May to the second week in June.

E. Fern fly, from the middle of June to the middle of July.

K. Welshman's button, from the middle of June to the end of June.

L and M. Red spinners, from the middle of June to the middle of August.

9. Blue gnat, from the latter end of June to the second week in August.

N and O. Ant flies, from the middle of June to the middle of July.

10. Lesser wharling dun, from the end of June to the end of August.

11. Latter stone fly from the middle of July to the second week in August.

12. Little pale blue, from the middle of August to the end of September.

To these flies I could add a variety of others, but I do not think they would do you any service: an overloaded book is as unprofitable as an overheated imagination, and a jumble of inconsistencies is not likely to benefit any one. In this, as in most other pursuits, Nature is the safest guide; and in going beyond her dictates, we condemn the title which her authority had previously confirmed. In my next I will give you some account of the method by which trout are taken with the minnow and worm, though it is a species of angling I do not admire, and which I had, at one time, no intention of touching upon; still it might be thought unpardonable in me to neglect such a prominent and destructive feature; and, more especially, as it may be pursued at a time, and in a

situation, perhaps, when a fly would be comparatively innocent. I know there are many so wedded to this, that they ridicule the idea of any other mode; nor can I blame them, for I am myself as rigid a partisan on the opposite side. The fly, in my opinion, stands unrivalled; the exercise it affords is both more pleasing and more variable; and the opportunity it offers of calling forth the best efforts of ingenuity, certainly entitles it to the rank of precedence.

TABLE OF SPORT.

When.	Wind.	Water.	Weather.	Flies.	Number.
March 27.	S. W.	Rising.	Showers.	G. 1. A.	35
29.	S.	High.	Cloudy.	1. A.	30
30.	S.	Falling.	Mild.	A.	27
April 1.	S. W.	Fine.	Cloudy.	A.	29
3	W.	Clear.	Bright.	G. 1.	14
4.	N. W.	Clear.	Stormy.	1. B.	17
6.	N.	Low.	Cold.	1. B.	20
7.	N.	Low.	Windy.	1. B.	16
8.	N. W.	Low.	Showers.	A. B.	23

LETTER VII.

May 1.

Your rod and tackle for minnow and worm fishing should be considerably stronger; and as I do not recommend the use of the latter bait, except in brooks, it will of course also be proportionably shorter. Some people will make a fly rod do for both purposes, by having half a dozen or more different tops to it; I should rather advise you to have one individually suited to this species of angling; though it may be as well, perhaps, in case you are uncertain of the state of the water when you go out, to have a four-jointed rod, with spare tops, *in your possession*, otherwise the rough usage of the minnow is ill adapted to the finer process of the fly.

A minnow, to fish well, should have been caught

at least four days before, and kept for that purpose with a number of others, in a cistern of river water, and pieces of bread and small worms occasionally thrown in for food, this will scour them, and also cause them to become firm and strong, and better able to bear the continued trials which they must undergo, after being penetrated with the hook; a minnow of this kind will at least last out four of those fresh caught. It will be necessary for you always to take out a stock of these, and if it should happen that you have no tin vessel for the purpose, or a boy to carry it, a strong glass bottle, that you can put in your pocket, will do as well, only it must have a hole in the cork large enough to admit a quill, to allow a passage for the air, as without this, and a frequent change of water, the minnows would inevitably perish before you received the use of them. The tackle-makers, in London, have lately found out a method of making artificial minnows, which, *they say*, answer the purpose full as well as natural ones: it may be so; but until I see it proved, I cannot sanction it exactly. Formerly these minnows used to be made of a hard substance, such as mother-of-pearl, and painted to the most perfect resemblance,

but the fault was, that a fish, from the stubbornness of the substance, found out the deception before it was too late, and was seldom or ever hooked. Now they are differently manufactured of silk, worked and painted to a similar resemblance, and so soft and pliant, as to yield to the slightest pressure: this is, no doubt, a great improvement, and, perhaps, may answer, in some degree, where you have either no time to catch others, or find a scarcity of them.

There are two methods of using a minnow---trolling and spinning: I shall first mention the former. Have three hooks, (No. 6,) and a good, round, even, silk-worm gut, with half a yard of small silk well waxed; wrap on one of the hooks neatly, the same as for worm; then lay the other two back to back, and place the hook you have wrapped with its back to the others; wrap all these together tight and neatly up to the top, and over a few times round the gut; make a loop on the length of gut without a knot, wrapping it neatly with the silk: you must also have a piece of lead of a conical form, with a small hole in it, to be placed in the mouth of the minnow. When you

bait, take a very long darning needle, and run the loop of the gut through the eye of it; and, placing the sharp point at the vent of the minnow, pass it through and up out at the mouth; so that when the length of gut is drawn to the utmost, the hooks may remain with only the bent parts out at the point which was first pierced: run your lead down the gut into the mouth of the minnow, and, with a small needle and thread, sew up the under and upper lip, to secure it; have a large loop at the end of your swivel line, to admit the minnow's going through every time you bait; or you may use a spring-swivel, in the same way as is done for pike. In fishing, let the minnow fall gently out of your hand, and throw it to the opposite side of the stream; draw it smoothly across, at about mid-water, till you bring it near the side; then turning your rod, carry it quick up, so as to make it spin, in resemblance of a small fish striving against the stream. If a trout should rise at you, which is easily observed, give him a moment's time before you strike; by such means he will be more securely hooked; for, in general, they are so eager to take a bait of this kind, that they make the attack with the rapidity and fierceness of a tyger.

The other method I mentioned is as follows; have a large hook, (No. 1 or 2,) rather long in the shank, and wrap it on to your gut, which should be at least a yard in length, very neatly, extending the wrapping on the gut for about an inch, or a little more, which will cause it to spin the better; and to promote this still further, I would have you use two swivels. Draw your hook first through the mouth of the minnow, and out at the gill, then turning it again through the mouth, bring the point of the hook all the way down the sides, rather nearest the belly, and quite to the fork, drawing out the point at the tail, and leaving it somewhat on a curve, which, from the opposition it will make to the stream, will cause it to spin the better; and, to make it sink, you must have two large shots on your gut, betwixt the hook and the lower swivel. In throwing the minnow considerable art is required to keep it entire and untorn, which there is great reason to apprehend will happen to an unskilful performer: to prevent this as much as possible, never allow your line to go out to the full extent, lest, by a sudden jirk, you either get rid of your bait, or tear it so as to be entirely useless; your plan will be, to let it meet the stream

exactly at the moment it would otherwise gain its greatest extent of distance; it will fall much lighter, make less disturbance in the water, and altogether have a neater appearance, and be more likely to excite the attention of a fish, which, by a little playful and dextrous management, you may often entice to take your bait, contrary, perhaps, to his real inclination. The best time of the day for this species of angling is early in a morning, in deep holes, and near the roots of trees, but especially if the water be recovering from an overflow of rain.

In brooks which communicate with any large river, you frequently meet with the finest trout; and no method is so sure of taking them, provided the water is in proper order, as fishing with a worm. On account of the greater scarcity of food of every description, and the impossibility of any part even of that escaping the unwearied watchfulness of a fish in so confined a situation, it will be your own fault should success not reward your labor. The only difficulty will be, in preventing a large fish from breaking your tackle; it would be imprudent to throw him out at the moment, and still you must not allow him any quantity of line, as he would

infallibly retreat to his hold, under some strong roots of a tree, with which such places abound: confide therefore to the strength of your line, and should the bank be high, get your landing-net under him as soon as you can. The most esteemed worms for this kind of fishing are, the lob or dew-worm, the dunghill red worm, and the brandling; the former for muddy, and the two latter for clear water. Your hooks will of course vary in size, but the manner of baiting them is similar. Take two worms, the first of which should be put on your hook at the head, bringing it out again about the middle, and run it up the line to make room for a second, which must be put on with the tail first, and the other then drawn down to meet it: worms, from a particular cause, frequently drop down into the water, from off the banks, in this manner, and are greedily devoured by the fish. When you use the larger worms, they require no lead to sink them, but should swim gently down as the stream carries them; the lesser kind will require two or three shot to be fixed on your line, about 12 or 14 inches from the hook; do not allow it to sink quite to the bottom, but nearly so; and follow the course of it gently, till you feel a

fish to bite, and when you have given him time to gorge it, a sudden, but not very strong pull, will make him your own. In this method also you may use maggots, which are even more destructive; but for this bait I prefer still water to streams, especially canals which are contiguous to a river, for if there are trout in the latter, they seldom fail also of abounding in the former. Maggots are best bred from a beast's liver or sheep's head, which, after having hung till it is well blown, and you can perceive them to be alive, must be taken down, and put into a large box, and there remain to bring them to a proper growth; then take a sufficient quantity of bran, and pour it over them, and in a short time they will come out from their breeding place, and scour themselves, this is the first brood; a second may be had by running a large stick through the liver, and hanging it across the box---in a few days they will again begin to drop out into the bran strewed beneath for that purpose. This is the summer process, and a little more warmth is only required to preserve them through the winter. When you use them, have a hook (No. 6.) with a long length of gut, one shot in still water, and three in streams. About an hour be-

fore you intend to begin fishing, throw a couple of handsfull into the water, at four or five different places; this will attract the fish, and cause them to take your bait with less suspicion, which will also be considerably diminished by fishing each place alternately. Salmon-pinks, and skirlings, are to be taken in this way with great success, especially if on a hot day you use a small red fly with a maggot stuck on to the hook, and allow it to swim gently down the stream: grayling also, and, in fact, most other fish, are particularly partial to this species of food; and I do not think I ever found it disappoint my promised expectations. Evening, however, is the time when greater execution may be done with it, but let me recommend you never to hazard your health or reputation by night-work of this description; it can only be palliated by absolute necessity, and I should hope its most zealous defender would find considerable difficulty in promoting its adoption.

The two small fish I have just mentioned, are usually ranked under the denomination of samlets, and both their nature and appearance seem to warrant the conclusion: but though similar in

some respects, they are totally different in others: and a nice observer will quickly discern the variety. They delight most in shallow rapid streams; will rise at any fly you use, particularly a red and small black; and to one who wishes to trifle away an hour or two, afford a fund of amusement. Their eagerness to bite after a shower is so great, that if you fish with four flies, you frequently take one with each at the same moment; and as they seldom exceed 7 inches in length, and 3 ounces in weight, you have no cause to dread their breaking your tackle, which, for this purpose, cannot be too fine. The pink, which is the young salmon, generally makes his visit with the first flood after April, and continues in the fresh water until June, when he again returns to the ocean, and progressively attains the different denominations of salman-trout and sewin, till he arrives at maturity, and then assumes the proud title of king of the rivers. If from any unfortunate circumstance he should be prevented visiting his winter quarters, or that his stay should be protracted beyond the limits of necessity, he becomes languid and weak, gradually falling away to mere skin and bone; in this state I have seen one taken, which, though

28 inches long, scarcely weighed 9 ounces. The departure of this little fish announces the arrival of the skirling, which continues till August, and then takes the same rout as the preceding. They both afford excellent diversion, and will rise at a time when larger fish remain inactive: I must add, however, that they are, frequently, very troublesome companions, and tempt you often to wish them at the d---l; for, in favourable weather, from their repeated, and, in my opinion, unfortunate attacks, a large trout becomes shy of making a similar movement; and the smallest disturbance in the water forces him to retreat beyond the reach of temptation. Here then is another instance, where the patience of an angler must be put to the test; and I know of none more vexatious, except a similar usage from chub or dace, a hundred of which are not worth a straw; the others are excellent, probably superior to a trout; but they are so small, that in half a day you secure just sufficient for a single dish.

The Grayling or Umber is a fish which shows little sport, though in great esteem with some for its excellence on the table. It is very rare that

any are taken of a larger size than two pounds, one indeed is reckoned a good fish, but more frequently they may be averaged at eight or ten ounces. When other fish are getting out, this is coming into season; and, from September till January, retains its superiority. The flies they are most partial to are, in the catalogue, Nos. 6, 7, 9, and 11; and, in high water, a maggot is frequently found to be an excellent bait. Eager in his attacks, but sluggish in his nature, a grayling will repeat his attempts at your fly at least a dozen times, should he not previously hook himself; and even a slight scratch has little or no effect in cooling his courage. What would alarm a trout, only stimulates him to more daring assaults; and, from this cause, his temerity generally meets with its reward. When hooked, his efforts to disengage himself are of the same wanton indifference, and, after he first becomes unsuccessful, his heart entirely fails him, and he may be drawn out without the smallest struggle. They generally are found in rivers where trout are plentiful, and the Usk is the only exception to this rule that I am acquainted with. The Wye, and the Irvon, at the western extremity of the county, abound

with them, which luckily compensates, in some measure, for the indifference of these rivers in other respects. I think, if you make any alteration in your tackle for grayling fishing, it should be finer; and recollect, that when he is in proper season, he becomes nearly black, especially about the head.

TABLE OF SPORT.

When	Wind	Water	Weather.	Fly	Number.
April 10.	S.	Low.	Cloudy.	A. B.	17
13.	S.	Fine.	Showry.	1. B. A.	26
14.	W.	Clear.	Bright.	B. C.	12
16.	N. W.	Clear.	Gloomy.	D. A. C.	20
19.	S.	High.	Windy.	B. 1. C.	19
20.	S.	High.	Mild.	D. A.	30
21.	E.	Clear but high.	Cold.	1. 3. 4.	18
25.	N. E.	Bright.	Stormy.	4. 1. B.	22
28.	N.	Fine.	Windy.	D. 4. 5.	30

LETTER VIII.

June.

To all your repeated questions which I have hitherto abstained from answering, I doubt I cannot but give you very evasive replies; for many of them, indeed, are so totally unconnected with the object of my present visit to this country, that such a detail might be deemed unauthorized by the proposals originally held out. Upon such, therefore, as come within this pale, I must preserve a strict silence, and conform myself merely to those which do not so far transgress the bounds of consistency.

The feathers of a cock have already been so often mentioned, that you may expect me now, perhaps, to say something of his game; and, if my recollection be still perfect, I think you thus expressed yourself at our last meeting. This country has

been long held in estimation for its breed of game-cocks, and very deservedly so. They are of good size, strong, and close feathered; and of a constitution equal to the severest process of a feeder. Their color is generally red dun, or duck-wing grey; few reds, some blacks and piles, and scarcely any gingers. About 30 years ago, a gentleman of the name of B------, an Irishman, settled in this neighbourhood, and from a breed which he introduced, there sprang a kind of mixed one, very superior, I understand, to any that could be brought against them: these were chiefly reds, and, as long as the cross answered, were invincible. Time, however, which tries the stoutest constitutions, made a serious inroad upon these, and the leek finally triumphed over its union with the shamrock. Since then, nothing similar has been attempted; and the blood is still suffered to flow in its native current. Fine air, good water, and good food, are so essentially necessary to the well-being of a race of game cocks, that their superiority in this country is scarcely to be wondered at. Nature is amply profuse of the two former blessings; and where industry cannot supply the latter, the genius of a Welshman is so *fertile* in this respect, as to deprive

him of all scruple in the pursuit of its most lawless inclinations. The temptations, however, for entering into the spirit of cock-fighting, are very trifling; there are no public meetings, nor any associations of gentlemen to prevent the abuse of natural valor; an animal which, in himself, is an example of every thing bold and imposing, is here sacrificed to the mean and selfish disposition of one, or the cruel tyranny of another; and his best and most successful efforts are seldom rewarded, but with an ignominious and lingering death. There would be some difficulty, perhaps, in defending the system, under any circumstances; but when it is pursued with more than a common degree of wantonness, certainly the lash of censure cannot be too severely applied.

As I was lately present at one of these exhibitions, which was both novel and amusing, and marks very strongly the character of its supporters, I will give you an account of it, and can only assure you, that, however strange it may appear, it is absolutely void of all fiction. The palm of merit lay betwixt the breed of two different parishes, and Easter Monday was the day fixed upon

for a final decision. Accordingly, early in the morning, a detachment of birds, ready trimmed, were dispatched a distance of seven miles to meet their antagonists; for whenever any thing of this kind happens, the scene of action always takes place in each parish alternately. It so fell out, in the present case, that the youths of L------ *had a warning* that those of B------ intended to use some foul play; and, in consequence of this *secret visit*, they sent for a seer, or otherwise a reputed magician, to counteract the wicked machinations of their adversaries, who actually came a distance of 30 miles, across the wildest part of the country. His first care was to mix the miraculous ingredients, and, on the night previous to the affray, to reconnoitre his ground. Early on the following morning he made a second visit; and, having sprinkled the deadly opiate over all parts of the pit, he quietly took himself out of the way, and was to re-appear, at a stated time, in the character of a perfect stranger. The unsuspecting party were now arrived; and, after settling a few preliminaries, such as weighing-in, matching, &c. &c. the first battle of a main of eleven was fought, and soon decided in favor of the unwary. In this man-

ner ended the second, third, and fourth. The fifth was a drawn one, and the conjuror was *then* heard to say, that *his work was done*, and that his party would win the remaining six. These poor deluded wretches, who but a moment before were sunk in the deepest despondency, now became equally animated, and were no longer able to contain their wild and ungovernable joy. The secret was soon out, and the conjuror instantly became the execration of one, as he was the idol of the other party; so sudden an effect has the slightest reverse on minds susceptible of no feeling but a self-interested and momentary gratification. With what different emotions the sixth battle was fought I will leave you to guess; it was long and obstinate, till a fatal body-blow once more broke the charm of Circe. An appeal was now made to the umpire, whether all was fair, who soon decided in the affirmative, and it was not until two more battles had finished in a similar manner, that the last and most astonishing expedient was at length had recourse to. A hole was dug in the middle of the pit, about a foot deep, and the Bible, a book least of all, I should think, calculated to accelerate such a business, with all due solemnity buried within it.

To an ordinary understanding this will appear, perhaps, more marvellous than true; but to those who rightly appreciate the frailties of the human mind, it will present only one of those numerous defects which an untutored confidence raises into maturity. The result of this experiment was scarcely more fortunate than the preceding, only one battle of the three remaining being won by the minority; so that out of eleven they lost nine. Enquiry was now made for the prophet, but the luckless knave had made himself scarce, being very strongly suspected of having received a higher bribe from the conquerors.

In some parts of the kingdom, such ridiculous proceedings would be treated with the contempt they deserve; and, I believe, no *earthly* incantation would have any effect upon a *certain gentleman* in lessening *his* confidence in the *family blaw*.

My next letter will most probably announce my departure; August is fast approaching, and it will take me some time to prepare my dogs for their moorland excursion. So believe me, &c.

TABLE OF SPORT.

When	Wind.	Water.	Weather.	Flies.	Number.
May 1.	N. W.	Clear.	Cloudy.	D. A. 2.	26
3.	S.	High.	Very hot.	1. 5.	35
4.	S.	High.	Moist.	1. 5.	29
5.	S. W.	Clearing.	Warm.	1. 5. 6.	37
8.	W.	High.	Showery.	1. 5.	10
11.	E.	Clear.	Bright.	6. H.	12
14.	E.	Clear.	Bright.	B. H.	10
17.	E.	Fine.	Bright.	B. H.	13
20.	E.	Low.	Bright.	B. H.	19
22.	N. E.	Very low.	Stormy.	H. 4.	18
24.	N.	Very low.	Bright.	H. 4.	23
27.	W.	Rising.	Cloudy.	H. 4.	26
28.	S. W.	High.	Rainy.	4.	38
30.	S.	High.	Gloomy.	H. R.	25

LETTER IX.

June.

As I have before said that no one can be a good fisherman who does not make his own flies, so also must he be able to collect the proper materials. The best season for this work is the winter, when the plumage of every bird is more glossy and strong, and the skin of every animal cleaner and more bright. The feathers of a young bird are at no time of any use; they break with the slightest exertion, and possess no power whatever in the water. Those birds which are migratory, however, we must be content to lay hold of when we can; such as the landrail, the fieldfare, the woodcock; and in Wales, particularly, where it appears only in the winter, the starling: this latter bird is, of all others, the most profitable, as the frequent mention of his name will amply testify; but where

he is not to be had, the wing of a snipe is a very good substitute, particularly for the dark blue. In making all flies, the fibres of the feathers should be as little separated as possible; some indeed are so coarse that this cannot be avoided; but where it may be done otherwise, it should never be neglected: for instance, the red feather of the partridge's tail is of this description, and there is no substitute for it, except it be that of a landrail, which, only in *some countries*, will be found to answer.

I shall now mention those birds which afford the best feathers, enumerating also the particular parts from whence they are to be taken. *Blues* from the wings of the jay, woodpigeon, starling and snipe, also from the hackles of a dun cock or hen, and the tail of the larger tom-tit: *browns* from the wings of the hen pheasant, the mallard, the partridge, the landrail, and the woodcock; the hackles of the grouse, the partridge, and the second long feathers of a cock pheasant's tail: *reds* from the wings of the mallard, the landrail, the thrush, and common hen; from the tail of a partridge, and the hackles of a dark red and ginger-colored cock,

also the tail of the redpole: these, with the hackle feathers of a bittern, the grey breast feathers of a mallard, the tail feathers of a peacock, and the black and white ones of an ostrich, will be found to answer every purpose of artificial trout-flies. The only difficult ones to get good are blue hackle feathers; those of a cock being in general too long, and of a hen either too weak or not of a decided color, so that you will best secure a supply by first obtaining a breed of dun fowls, and carefully keeping it pure from any other cross. When once your feathers are collected, divide them into several portions, each color by itself, and preserve them for use in small paper bags, which should be properly labelled, and hung up in a perfectly dry situation. "Dimidium facti, qui cœpit, habet," is an observation too well known to require any comment from me, but under no circumstances is it more applicable than the present, of which a very little experience will soon convince the most rigid scepticism. The next thing to be considered is, the selection of the different materials for the bodies of your flies, and the best method of obtaining them. You cannot be too nice or too parti-

cular in this respect; the wings of every fly are but a very secondary consideration, and, I imagine, afford no more nutriment to a fish, than the feathers of a goose, or the bristles of a pig, would to a human being: in fact, I have known several instances where the same fly, *with wings*, would not stir a fish, and which afterwards, *deprived of them*, did wonderful execution. Let your book be well stored with the following furs and colors; viz. bear's hair, grey, dun, light and dark colored; camel's hair, both dark and light; badger's hair from the ear, both light and dark brown; hog's down from the throat and tail, black, red, whitish, and sandy color; seal's fur; mohair, camlet, and worsteds of all colors; the tail also of a squirrel, and the brush of a fox cub, afford excellent dubbing; the fur of a hare's neck, and also her ears; and, above all, the yellow fur of a martern cat. The greatest part of these may be had of the furriers, but it saves a vast deal of time and trouble, and amounts to very little more expence, to bespeak them of the tackle-makers, who will select the best of every thing, and proportion them out in proper quantities. I would advise you to have

two books, one individually for made flies and hooks*, and the other for materials: and here let me add, that, in my opinion, the Limerick and Carlisle hooks are decidedly superior to every other: there is a sort made of cast steel, than which nothing can be more paltry, and, indeed, those from Birmingham are generally bad; a fish of a pound weight will always straiten them---a fault which my own experience cannot once lay to the charge of those I recommend: all are liable to break, but to bend is an unpardonable crime. The best silk for tying on a fly is what the barbers or wigmakers use; this should be untwisted, and one of the three parts is sufficiently strong for the purpose; but other silks of

"All the gay hues that wait on female pride"

should form a part of your collection; of these the common netting silk is the least useful, being too round, and not joining kindly. The substance and length of your reel-line must be regulated by the river you are angling on, and the size of the fish you are likely to meet with; and your cast line

* Hooks, hair, and gut are best kept free, the former from rust, and the latter from becoming dry and husky, either in oiled paper or parchment.

should not, at any time, exceed the length of your rod, independent of the gut, to which it must taper regularly. The length of your gut must be regulated by the number of flies you fish with, not allowing a space of more than three lengths betwixt the end of your cast line, and the nearest dropper. Instead, in the early part of the season, of fishing with one fly, I have often found it answer to use three of the same species, but of different shades; another plan also I have frequently found to answer, which is, in a bright sultry day, to throw your fly up to a rapid fall, and allow the stream to take it perfectly under water to the bottom; in that case a fish is almost certain of seizing it; and, I believe, if this was more generally known and practised, we should not be annoyed with so many complaints about bright suns and clear skies. In this way I have had most excellent sport with the cow-dung and shorn flies: and I never found, under these circumstances, the air too keen, or the wind too strong and easterly. In regard to the most favourable state of this element, I think a south-west wind preferable to any other, and one that generally brings with it either slight flying showers, or a dark gloomy sky. A north is

good for the minnow and worm, but, in general, too boisterous for the fly; though certainly, taken all in all, is more profitable than an eastern breeze, which I never knew to favour the diversion, except in the manner I have just related. It is somewhat remarkable, that after a flood, when the water is clearing, and of an ale color, the fish in the USK will rise famously, and that those in the WYE and IRVON, at not more than twenty miles distance, under similar circumstances, will not stir an inch. I cannot account for this, except it be, that after heavy rains, the two latter rivers are impregnated with an overflow of sulphurcous water, arising from the numerous mineral springs which in their neighbourhood abound, and which is, in some degree, of a poisonous quality. From a nearly similar cause, the TEES and SWALE rivers in the north of England, lose much of that excellence which their appearance otherwise warrants: and, I am the more inclined to advance this hypothesis, as in neither of these four rivers do the fish ever arrive at size or perfection. It will considerably promote your success, I think, if you endeavour to accommodate the color of your cast line to that of the water, and, as the medium betwixt dark and light

is very trifling, I will, in this instance, venture to depart from the old and favourite maxim; the two following recipes will be found most effectual. *For a brown.*---Boil a quarter of a pound of alum, previously pounded, till it be dissolved, and then add a pound of walnut-tree bark from the branches, when the sap is up: boil them one hour; and, after skimming it and letting it stand about ten minutes, put in the materials you wish to discolor, stirring them about for the space of a minute---not longer, as they will become too dark and liable to rot. If logwood be substituted for walnut, it will dye a bluish water color; but the best for this purpose is the following method. Boil about four inches square of green bauze cloth, and a quarter of a pound of alum, in three pints of soft water half an hour slowly; let it stand till near cold, and then put in your gut or hair for an hour; and should it be too bright a green, give it a blueish cast by rubbing it over with ink.

Every thing, I assure you, which makes deception more alluring, should be resorted to by an angler; for let his experience be ever so well derived, or his confidence secure, he will always find

sufficient opportunity to regret the inefficacy of each. Where all depends so much upon the elements, it is impossible to foresee the disadvantages under which you are generally so likely to labor, and therefore to repeat an observation which I made in one of my former letters, there is more patience, more science, and more experience required, to make a good angler, than is necessary to the attainment of a similar character in any other diversion; and this is very strongly corroborated, not only by the preference which old men generally receive, but also by the success which attends their endeavours. You will thus see the necessity of not going to any extravagant lengths: I know of no situation where fashion ought to have so little ascendancy, and where Nature should be followed with more strict adherence to truth. Still I have had repeated opportunities of witnessing a departure from this line of proper consistency. The innovations, which fashion, indeed, makes upon convenience, become every day more glaring, nor is it confined to any individual class; some one, perhaps, may be more extravagant than another, but all are equally ridiculous. It is much to be regretted that such propensities cannot be made

more really useful, and in these times particularly, more decidedly formidable; for the top of a boot, or the collar of a coat, will frequently gain more recruits than the best sergeant in the service.

The letter which I have enclosed in this is intended to convey some idea of the ridiculous figure a man must make in qualifying himself for a sportsman, at a more advanced period in life. It is of little consequence what his means may be of acquiring information, if he cannot, at the same time, both reason and act upon it; and equally adopt a plan of his own consistent with each. Necessity, in this case, may do much, and, in some measure, compensate for the want of earlier instruction; but as youth is the most probable period for imbibing an attachment to field diversions, their apparent insignificance will excite less emulation in one whose habits have, perhaps, been very differently formed, and as scrupulously followed. The most intimate acquaintance with theory and practice can only render a man completely *au fait* in his own individual career; and it is the greatest presumption to suppose that one of fifty can quietly submit to the same tedious, but neces-

sary restrictions, which stimulate the attempts of a junior candidate. Indeed it is scarcely possible for a person who takes up fishing late in life, either to reap profit or amusement from it; and I therefore seriously recommend to all those who are thus solicitous to exhibit themselves, never to indulge in the vain hope of eminence or skill.

To-morrow is fixed for my departure, and although I shall leave Cambria with some regret, I cannot help thinking, partly in the words of Sir William Temple, that it is a country "where profit is more in request than honor, and where there is more wealth than pleasure; where a man would chuse rather to travel than to live, shall find more things to observe than to desire, and few persons either to esteem or to love."

TABLE OF SPORT.

When.	Wind.	Water.	Weather.	Flies.	Number.
June 2	S.	Lower.	Sultry.	I. 7. 8. R.	30
3	S. W.	Low.	Thunder storms.	I. 7. E.	5
5	W.	Clear.	Bright.	I. 7.	12
7	N. W.	Fine.	Bright.	7. 8. E.	14
10	N.	Fine.	Cold.	7.	10
12	S. E.	Fine.	Warm.	K. L. M.	28
15	S.	High.	Gloomy.	E. K. 9.	32
16	S.	High.	Showry.	I. H. L. M.	35
18	S. W.	Lower.	Mild.	8. E. K. 9.	38
20	S.	Clear.	Warm.	K. 9. N. O.	27
22	S.	Clear.	Gloomy.	I. 9. K. L.	29
24	S. W.	Fine.	Cloudy.	7. E. 9.	42
25	S.	Fine.	Showry.	9. N. O. 10.	45
28	S. W.	High.	Cloudy.	N. O. 10.	38

SIR,

I AM one of those unfortunate beings, who have lately been obliged to turn sportsman, and having seen an advertisement announcing a publication which is attributed to you, I have presumed upon the liberty of laying my case before you, in the hope that you will dispense some of those favors to an individual, which are already promised to the public. It is but a short time since I quitted the drudgery of the shop, and came into possession of a small independence, bequeathed to me by an uncle. I had, however, for some years, anticipated the bequest; not by *reducing* the value, but in idea enjoying the luxury of quiet possession. Of the death of my relative, therefore, I heard with no other concern, than what generally arises from quitting a state of poverty, to enter upon one of comparative affluence: he was a person whom I scarce knew; and the only idea I had of his principles was, from his having apprenticed me to an

eminent bookseller in the city, and paid the usual fee of admission. At the age of twenty-three then, I left London; and, if the good wishes of some, and the envy of others, could in the least actuate a heart not entirely deaf to flattery, I was indeed "ter et amplior beatus."

The tedious incidents of a stage-coach journey I will not relate, but bring you at once to the spot where my destiny has unfortunately fixed me. No transformation was ever effected under such an obvious disadvantage; and the most judicious naturalist would instantly pronounce me in an ephemeral state. How often have I wished to exchange the pure regions of Caermarthenshire for the gloomy precincts of Paternoster-Row! and with what enthusiastic fondness would I hail the hour which transported me from the romantic banks of the Tivy to the sunny environs of Sadler's Wells! one day in the week *there* crowned the summit of my wishes, whilst six times as many *here* only increase my perplexity. My neighbours are either too proud to notice me, or, what is equally unlucky, too ignorant and supercilious to attract my attention; so that, as a resource against the effects which such

a situation might possibly produce, I have at length determined upon assuming the character in which I first introduced myself to you. With us the season for angling has already commenced; and to have some claim to the character beyond the mere title of a fisherman, I was induced to ask advice of our parson, who has long held the reputation of a *keen* sportsman. I found, however, his secrets were too valuable to be imparted to a stranger, and accordingly I made an overture to the magistrate, who is an old gentleman of seventy, of a very ancient family, and who from an infant had been bred up amidst the cry of hounds, and the yelping of spaniels. To him, I must confess, I looked up with something of a reverential awe; for, besides the situation which he held, his family, by two wives, *both of the purest blood*, was large and respectable; and the numerous tribe which claimed a *similar privilege*, gave him a kind of patriarchal character, ill suited to the disposition of the times. His manner was at once frank and ingenuous; and my reception such as every one, in a like situation, would be anxious to experience. His house, he said, was open to me at all times. His fat, good-looking wife too, was equally solicitous

to engage my attentions; and when I had replied to the simple queries of the daughter, and silenced the doubts of all, I summoned resolution to explain the object of my visit. It was most unfortunate, he knew nothing of angling; he was formerly a very Nimrod in the field, and no hare was, even now, too fleet for his greyhounds, or too cunning for his experience; indeed, I soon found that he had long been the terror of the whole race; and in recounting the various exploits of his youth, he bore himself with such an air of triumph, as, for the first time, convinced me how insignificant I appeared in the company of a *downright* sportsman. Happily, in the midst of one of these rapturous ebullitions, he was summoned to the aid of some unhappy damsel in distress, and, greedily seizing the opportunity, I took my leave.

I now determined to enter upon my occupation more systematically; I felt the value of independence, and was anxious to profit from the lesson I had received. Accordingly, I requested a friend in town to send me one or two of the best discourses upon Angling: these furnished me with every information; and a second letter soon

equipped me in a style very superior to the parson. With such a decided advantage, I sallied forth; and, having selected some of those flies which, from my books, I thought were most appropriate for the season, I laboured hard for a whole day, both in stream and still water, in shallow and deep, without being once able even *to see* a fish. My patience was exhausted, and, in returning home, I encountered the parson; we scarce spoke; I saw his basket was nearly full; and, to my still greater mortification, at the very moment when we met, he had hooked a fish of more than common size. This was sufficient to check my further progress; and, in spite of all my wishes to the contrary, he was soon secured. My pride, however, was doomed to undergo a still greater mortification; for, anxious to observe the kind of fly he had taken, I found it to be a---worm! For two days we had had a heavy rain, and the river was just subsiding within its usual bounds; but it never occurred to me, that at such times I ought to use a ground bait. Ashamed of my stupidity, I hurried from the spot, and retiring to rest a full hour earlier than usual, that I might have the speediest opportunity of retrieving my fame, soon forgot

my cares and perplexities under the influence of sleep. At dawn of day I again sallied forth, with a plentiful store of worms of almost every description; and, to take the full benefit of such advantage, was determined to try the whole river, before it had been otherwise disturbed. I now saw numbers of large fish, which glided away at my approach, with the swiftness of an arrow; and I also frequently observed them to take shelter beneath the roots of trees, or under the hollow of the banks. It was then I thought them as secure as if they had been in my basket, and I only longed for the parson to witness my triumph; but, alas! after baiting my hook, till my stock of worms was nearly exhausted, the only reward which crowned my exertions was once, *I thought*, a nibble. Tired and disappointed, I again gave up the pursuit, and retraced my steps; when who should I see on the opposite side of the river but my friend the divine! he was now attended by a little boy, who carried, in addition to the basket, a long pole, with a net of a circular form attached to the end of it. The idea of a poacher instantly occurred to me, and, for a moment, my cheeks were flushed with a conscious superiority. Alas! my joy was of short du-

ration; for when I was at the point of declaring the unfairness of the practice, I saw the use of the net was only to land those fish, after being hooked, which, from their size, it would be unsafe to trust to the precarious power of the rod or line. This was sufficient to disturb the most stoical disposition; and the display of a dozen other fish of equal, if not greater magnitude, which the little urchin of a boy thought might probably *gratify* my curiosity, tempted me, sadly against my inclination, to inquire, "what worm they took?" In a voice which will ever be familiar to me, I was answered, "a dun fly!"

This was a trial which my patience could no longer endure; I had drained my purse, and harassed myself to death, for no good purpose whatever: the branches of almost every tree were loaded with my flies, or particles of my line; and my rod was broken nearly to a stump. Luckily, however, as I thought, I mentioned my misfortunes to our miller, who, *between ourselves*, I believe is no better than he should be, and he promised to gratify my long-anticipated pleasure. Accordingly, the next morning, he brought me a dish of

the largest and finest trout I had yet seen, and at the very instant, my diligent pastor was again going forth to his usual occupation: the thought which then struck me, of meeting him on his return, with this trophy of my success, was quickly put in execution, and, for that whole day, very often mounted to the summit of a tree, was I eagerly watching the approach of one, whom, at any other time, I would willingly have gone miles to avoid. At length he came; and, with a step of anxiety which I could ill restrain, I hastened to meet him; from the airy motion of his basket I guessed him to have had no sport ---the lid of mine flew open in an instant---his surprise was equal to my utmost wishes, when taking out one of the largest fish, and examining his mouth, he coolly walked on, saying, "Aye, aye, I see the miller's been with you!!!"

Thus, Sir, has ended the unfortunate attempt, which I have been first induced to make as a sportsman: and, truly, I not only grieve at my disappointment, but I doubt it will be the cause of preventing me ever succeeding in a similar character; so that I must be obliged to live in

that happy state of ignorance and inactivity, which equally injures the health, and enfeebles the mind. As my stay, however, in this country, must be necessarily protracted till October, I shall perhaps again take the liberty of addressing you, under the title of THE TRIGGER, which, I trust, will compensate for every misfortune which has hitherto attended me under that of

PISCATOR.

END OF PART I.

W. Wilson, Printer, 4, Greville-Street, Hatton-Garden, London.



Letters on Sporting.

PART II.

SHOOTING.

LETTER I.

The dog, from the peculiarity of his habits, appears, of all the brute creation, to be the most natural companion of man: his attributes, indeed, are in some measure connected with our own; and though in most instances we are enabled to act without his assistance, there are others, both of advantage and amusement, wherein he appears truly conspicuous. If we look back to that æra in the world when every thing was common, and when man possessed uncontrouled dominion over all, it will strike us, perhaps, with wonder, how he was induced to make choice of such a partner in his toil, or by what means so comparatively insignificant a being recommended

itself to notice. Amongst the many nobler-looking and more powerful animals which were indiscriminately his own, there must have been some very extraordinary motive which determined his election, and as each was new to the other, the fidelity of all became alike open to suspicion. To suppose the dog, in his original state, to have been possessed of all those domestic qualities which at present characterize him, would be to hazard an opinion unsubstantiated by facts; but to allow him an equality of courage, and a superiority of intellect over his fellow creatures, can be borne out by daily and convincing experience.

The opinion of Buffon, that the shepherd's dog was the principal stock or scyon from whence have sprung so many other varieties, is entitled to every degree of attention; and if we consider the state of society when the powers of man were first called into action, we may naturally suppose him to look forward with some apprehension to the means of future safety and support. To effect so desirable a purpose, it would be necessary to conciliate the disposition of some one of those animals by whom he was surrounded, and which might not only

secure his person from danger, but contribute also in a more material degree to its preservation. The dog, from the nobleness of his nature, from his courage and sagacity, could scarcely fail to recommend himself to the favor of his master; and from his fidelity in the humble office which he first filled, his advancement to others of more considerable importance was the natural consequence. After a numerous portion of his fellow creatures had thus been reduced to a submissive or negative obedience, he was required to watch over and protect others, which had already risen high in the estimation of society; and perhaps, for a series of years, this was his principal and sole occupation. By degrees, the wants of his master assumed a more questionable shape; pleasure now occupied the place of necessity, and the dog was employed to contribute to the increase of the one, as he had already been engaged in diminishing the urgency of the other. From this period may be dated the change in his condition: he had made himself both useful and necessary; and however the refinements of later ages might have diminished his consequence, he was probably the next object, after

woman, which shared the attention and espoused the cause of man.

There is some pleasure in tracing the progress of any being, whose simple and individual merits have given him a station according with his deserts, and who, instead of tyrannising in his power, still endeavors to confirm his allegiance by those traits of honorable attachment, which first raised him from obscurity. It would far exceed the limits of my letter were I to give you a genealogical account of an animal so deservedly high in the estimation of the world, and of this country in particular: the climate of ENGLAND is, undoubtedly, more happily adapted to the display of his various powers than that of any other region; and the numerous tribes which have latterly been furnished, through the sources of importation, display that characteristic insignificance, which bears so strange a contrast to the noble independence of our own native breed.

The more immediate purpose of my letter leads me to the consideration of a species of dog gene-

rally denominated the POINTER, and SPAIN may be said to have originally sent forth a breed of these, which, at the time, were superior to every other. By a careful and judicious management, the union of this with the English setter, has produced a kind, in my opinion, infinitely surpassing either; and though the price of an animal is not *always* a proof of his merits, we may, however, fairly presume it is no bad criterion of his consequence*. From the communication which exists between the two countries at present, and which has been the means of introducing a new variety of horse, we may conclude that a similar circumstance furnished the pointer; and the period from which may be dated his introduction, is thus more easily ascertained; this, indeed, receives some confirmation, from no mention being made of him by those who had previously celebrated the sports of the field, the SETTER alone being occasionally

* Within the last fifteen years the price of pointers, or (what are significantly termed, by one gentleman of sporting celebrity,) *shooting dogs*, has increased beyond that of any other article, not absolutely necessary. Twenty guineas is now a *common* price; thirty, not considered by any means an *extravagant* one, and there are numerous instances where men have been duped into the payment of even *fifty, and one hundred!*

noticed in the allusions of the poet*. The real thorough-bred English setter is now become exceeding scarce; not from any disrepute he has fallen into, but, most probably, from having been crossed with others, which has completely changed his nature: indeed, it is lamentable to observe in what little estimation many things *English* are at present held, and how strenuous are the attempts to introduce a species of foreign produce, and a set of customs totally subversive of the character, and libelling the dearest privileges of a free-born Briton. A taste for novelty has, unfortunately, undermined our better judgment; and that experience, which had already acquired us the title of masters, has, by a strange and unpardonable negligence, turned us into mere unnatural copyists. Let us hope, however, these extravagant follies are on the point of dissolution, and that the return to reason will be hailed with all that fervor of delight, which such a protracted slumber is so well calculated to produce.

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* Gay calls him the "*creeping* spaniel," and Thomson again,

> "How, in his mid-career, the spaniel struck,
> Stiff, by the tainted gale, with open nose,
> *Outstretch'd*," &c.

The first person, on record, who broke a setter to the net, was ROBERT DUDLEY, DUKE of NORTHUMBERLAND, from which circumstance we may suppose, that dogs of this description were first used and possessed by the higher orders of society. In the then state of the kingdom, every luxury was confined within the circle of nobility; and it was not very probable, that one, so perfectly suited to their disposition, should, for a length of time, be allowed a more general participation. The face of the country precluded a possibility of there being much game, particularly partridges; and it is only reasonable to suppose that the exclusion of the lower orders from committing depredations against them, was dictated as much by prudential as interested motives. In the course of time these restrictions gradually ceased, or became so softened and ameliorated as to allow of a freer use being made of what, at first view, appears the unquestionable property of all; but as this is a subject which claims more particular attention, I shall delay my thoughts upon it to a future period.

LETTER II.

August.

FROM your letter, which has been forwarded to me at this place, I am sorry to find that you are in want of a pointer: my stock is at present so small, that it will not bear reducing, and I have lately been so little abroad, that I cannot recommend to you the purchase of one. Any person unacquainted with the world, and being in a similar manner anxious to increase his establishment, would have little hesitation in doubting the sincerity of my reply, for the Morning Papers teem so largely, at this season of the year, with dogs of a like description for sale, possessing every good and requisite qualification, that it seems a dangerous, if not a ridiculous assertion thus to lament over our poverty. London is the emporium of the world; and there are within it a number of

gentlemen who, in the common acceptation of the term, are *regular sportsmen*; that is, they regularly take out a certificate, regularly purchase a new gun and a brace of pointers, regularly sport a *new* jacket on the first of September, and regularly become completely tired of all, before the end of three days. From such a happy combination of circumstances, it is very natural to suppose that their wants are easily supplied, and that no pains are spared by those who are anxious to recommend the various articles of equipment. It is, perhaps, a fortunate occurrence, that, in this country, the seasons are introduced by a variety of amusements, not only capable of employing the mind, but, in some measure, necessary to its relaxation from more arduous pursuits. Fifty thousand licensed sportsmen, and more than one-tenth the number of lawless ones, sufficiently account for that determined havoc which annually takes place in the autumn, and the effect which this must necessarily have upon a certain part of the community, is not difficult to be foreseen*. Accordingly,

* The number of licensed sportsmen, in the year 1810, was upwards of 43,000, including Scotland and Wales, bringing in an increase to the revenue of 130,000*l.* exclusive of penalties.

very early in the spring, appear advertisements for sporting boxes, batchelor's cottages, and manorial rights; in the course of the summer, a companion is probably wanted for an excursion into the Highlands; and, a few weeks after, the stale attraction of water-proof locks, Dartford powder, staunch pointers, and high-bred setters, so continually stare you in the face, that a thorough sportsman cannot help secretly pitying his brethren of the trigger, for their unwearied attachment to such ridiculous but alluring invitations. Since the introduction of Russian pointers into this country, the question of merit affords a wider scope for discussion; and where there were formerly but two opinions, a third has likewise now obtained some share of approbation. If beauty of attitude and high ranging be entitled to the admiration of the sportsman, the improved thorough-bred English pointer surpasses all competition; but what are usually ranked under that denomination, are so strangely removed from real good breeding, that I do not wonder at a rough pointer or setter receiving more general encomium. It matters not, indeed, to some people, what a dog is, so that he will but range, and point; and the oftener he

does the latter, the more encouragement he receives; for if, unfortunately, there should be no game before him, it is a certain sign of some *having* been there; and this, in the idea of these *self-created* sportsmen, is the best possible proof of the excellence of his nose.

During a period of some years, I have had and seen as good dogs as any one, and these under the highest state of discipline. In the former part of my life, and at a very early age indeed, I was only in the habit of witnessing their performances; but the lesson I was taught was, in my opinion, so decidedly superior to what many have or can possibly receive, that I have never dared to venture upon more speculative opinions. I would choose my pointer as I would my horse; and accordingly make that selection for moor-shooting, partridge-shooting, and wood-shooting, as for the turf, the field, and the road. The dash of the fox-hound, the steady perseverance of the harrier, and the more easy, but not less determined resolution of the beagle, may, perhaps, convey as good an idea of the requisite qualifications of each, and

also more materially support my future arguments. All the pointers that I have seen have been higher rangers, and possessed more dash than setters, and for this reason are best calculated for moor-shooting and partridge-shooting in an open country. No person will deny, I believe, that the scent of a moor-game or grous, is much stronger than that of a partridge; and that therefore, in this instance, there is less probability of an high-ranging dog running over his game; the strength of the heath too, which would naturally impede the progress of a slow-ranging dog, will have much less effect upon that of a fast-goer, the action of the one freeing him from an obstacle, which that of the other must proportionably resist.

As a fine nose is the first thing I look to in a pointer, I am always particularly careful that both sire and dam are thus gifted. I think it one of the greatest proofs of bad blood for a dog to take much breaking; mine all stand naturally, and they are not only the highest-couraged, but the fastest rangers: this I attribute to nothing so much as their having the finest noses, which gives them

a confidence beyond the possibility of abuse. Pointers will not bear breeding in and in; so that the difficulty of keeping together a good breed is considerably increased*. I always select an old bitch for the purpose, in preference to a young one, as they are generally better mothers, and can be more conveniently spared. If I have no dog of my own, I take care to choose such an one as is well bred, and of a known good sort: it matters not the least what his other qualifications may be, provided only his appearance coincide with his descent. The properties I expect him to possess are, a round but not large head; wide open nostrils; full staring eyes; thin long ears; a moderate length of neck; shoulders, something betwixt upright and those of a fine-shaped horse; straight short legs, full of bone and sinew; small round feet; deep in the chest; short-backed; strong-loined; a stern very fine and thin, and

* This, I am told, is not an invariable rule, a cross being frequently found to answer betwixt the dam and her male offspring, and that of brother and sister: but it is an unnatural mode of acquiring, or rather of preserving, a breed of pointers; and I had rather risk the reputation of my dogs upon a more generous and independent principle.

smooth as silk. His color is not of so very material a consideration as to be an indispensible requisite: there are, and will continue to be, good dogs of all colors; and fancy generally directs us in this particular. For my own part, if I were to say to which I gave the preference, I would determine upon dark liver color, without any white; such of these as I have seen appearing to me to be of a more tractable temper, and to possess a stouter constitution than any others. I generally contrive to keep six whelps out of a litter, if I possibly can, as they are so apt to change their shape and appearance in the progress of maturity: the dam, in good condition, will rear four, and the remaining two I have suckled by a bitch, whose produce is destroyed, either in my own possession or that of a neighbour. In this case you cannot be too particular as to her condition and healthy appearance; for the disorders which are communicated to whelps in such a state of infancy, are very seldom or ever got rid of. On the day after they are pupped, I twist off the smallest piece possible of their sterns, and likewise cut their dew claws, because the process, at that age, is not only much more easily performed, but a wound

then inflicted sooner and more effectually heals. Though a full stern may be very fashionable, I cannot reconcile myself to the beauty of its appearance, especially in a pointer. I have one at present in my possession, with a stern as long and fine as that of a greyhound, and which, when she points, remains perfectly stiff and upright; she also makes the most rapid display of it in ranging: it is this last circumstance which induces me to wish it had been shortened; for the end of it, from so continually coming in contact with each side, is, in a short time, completely bloody, and they likewise exhibit a similar appearance. You may smile at the idea, but I assure you it is true, and the manner in which I account for it, will probably better reconcile you to its belief. It originates, I imagine, from getting torn in some hedge or other, the first time I take her out partridge-shooting; and, from her very free use of it, so continues to the end of the season, as on the moors the same thing never occurs. It does not always happen that a dog with a full stern carries it in a bold independent manner, but drags it after him, as if he either could not, or was afraid to raise it; and even the end, in pointing,

will frequently retain some slight degree of motion, the remedy for which is not only comparatively more cruel, but often fails to answer the intended purpose. The twisting off, therefore, the least possible piece, will eventually obviate all these unpleasant appearances; and it may be done to the greatest nicety, by using a pair of small tweezers, and drawing out the string or sinew at the same time.

At two months old, whelps should be taken from the bitch, and a week afterwards sent to their walks or quarters. I prefer keeping them at home for a few days, that they may be more immediately under my own eye, and myself be better able to observe the effect of separation, which is less likely to injure a number together, than when they are at once taken away, and indiscriminately dispersed. Some have a dislike to sending whelps out till they are three months old; this I object to for two reasons: first, because they are not so likely to do well with the coarse food they will most probably meet with, after having been so long pampered at home; and secondly, they are not so liable to attract the notice of their new hosts,

particularly children, who, in all such cases, are the best and most unwearied friends. The convenience of having quarters near where you live is a material consideration, as I never fail giving strict orders to be informed, on the least appearance of illness or distemper; and, in any case, the sooner the remedy is applied the more probable will be the expectation of cure. Where you can depend upon the person, it is not a bad plan to give him a small quantity of what you usually administer in cases of this kind: and if he act according to the instructions you leave with him, it will often save you much trouble, and prevent considerable disappointment; but as I shall soon have occasion to refer more particularly to this species of disorder, I will not at present, to any greater degree, dilate upon it. Many of your tenants, I believe, are large and respectable farmers; it is only to such that I would advise you to send whelps, as those in a more humble situation find it very difficult to keep themselves, and the crumbs of the opulent are generally more nutritious than the luxuries of the poor. I look upon a farm-house in the country as the best of all quarters: a dog has finer air, better water, sweeter food, and a warmer bed

than any other place can afford; and his feet pressing nothing but turf, will more effectually assist his growth, and remove the apprehension of disproportioned or distorted limbs: he will also continually be in the midst of sheep and poultry, and will acquire, from early habit, so high a respect for these animals, as to make him at all times conscious of their consequence hereafter. There is, however, one objection to such places very difficult to remove, and which can only be done by a particular method; I mean the liberty which is given to a dog to rove at his pleasure, and to chase hares, partridges, larks, or any thing else he meets with. I doubt, the strictest injunctions will not always prevent the servant from disobedience to the commands of his master; and if these fail, you may be allowed, I think, to interfere more personally: a pecuniary gratuity is what I am very far from recommending generally: but where the one party cannot possibly feel aggrieved, and where so trifling a recompense may respectively assist each of the others, the bounds of conscientious propriety, in this instance, will not be so unpardonably transgressed. All such preventions to a dog's trespassing in this way, as iron hoops,

circular and heavy logs of wood, are bad; they destroy his natural gait, swell the joints of his legs, and very often disturb that harmony of temper upon which so much of his future excellence depends. Upon some occasions, a dog should never be allowed to follow a servant into the field, especially early in the morning when he fetches his horses up, and late in the evening when he turns them out; for at those times all game are on the move, and a leveret is generally too tempting a prize for either to resign the chance of gaining. After one or two proper punishments, a dog will soon learn the necessity of compliance, and a word will then prove sufficiently authoritative to confine him to his quarters. If the mode I have recommended, however, should not be found effective, I would resort to stronger measures: and probably a wire run through the foot, in the manner practised with hounds, may eventually accomplish your purpose. In ten days or a fortnight from the time this is taken off, the wound will heal; and, during that period, you will have acquired a sufficient intimacy with him to enter upon a system of regular discipline, which I intend should form the subject of my next letter.

LETTER III.

FEW men are so particular about their pointers as I am, for which reason I never suffer them to be broke by another. I never recollect but one good dog-breaker, and he was so no longer than whilst his attentions were confined to a few. When I first knew him, he considered it a good season if he sold three brace of his own, and broke as many for other people; these he would turn out as steady as possible; but since his fame has been more widely circulated, his consequence has increased, and his necessities have diminished; so that from six brace, which was the average of his former efforts, he now regularly calculates upon five-and-twenty; half of these he probably sells for twelve guineas, and the remainder are delivered *properly* broke for three guineas each dog: the profits of

many other breakers, I have no doubt, are equally productive; but I cannot place the same confidence in their abilities. Eight young dogs are as many as one man can possibly manage, or should encounter at a time; and if he does his duty, he will have but very few moments unoccupied. In the spring of the year he may continue out the whole of the day, but as the weather becomes warmer, his excursions should be confined to morning and evening; and for the month of June, and the first three weeks in July, gentle exercise should be the chief object of his attentions. The best time for breeding a litter of whelps is in February; they have then the benefit of all the fine weather, and, before the commencement of the bad, are sufficiently strong to be secure against its effects. At eleven months old I take them from their quarters, but previous to any drilling first get them into proper condition; then teach them to lead and go in couples, and, in some measure, attend to the word of command.

These things being effected, I next commence the task of breaking, which, as my dogs all stand naturally, is perhaps not to me so arduous as to

many others. I take out two young dogs and a very slow old one at the same time; the reason I select such an one is, that the others may have the speed of him, and not keep following and hunting the same ground he is going: to make every dog take a separate range is a leading feature in this department: and nothing will so soon effect it as confidence, which can only be secured by allowing each to seek for and find his own game. If, therefore, a dog should continue to hunt his companion, the best plan is to take him out alone, or so constantly with strange dogs, that his predilection for such habits may cease with the cause which produced them. When a dog first begins to point, he will probably want a little speaking to, to prevent his chasing or footing too eagerly; but words should, at all times, be used with the greatest caution; and a real good dog ought never to require them; your hand must direct all his movements, and in every situation be the only interpreter; I expect my dogs will always drop when I hold it up, and take whatever course it may otherwise direct them: for this reason, *no dog* should ever be allowed to go out of sight, and a *young one* never out of hearing.

When birds get up wild, dogs are apt either to keep ranging on, or follow them with the eye; this is bad: in whatever situation a dog sees a bird---running, flying, or dead, he should instantly drop, and not move an inch, till you have gone to the spot yourself, and are thoroughly satisfied that not another feather is remaining. As soon as a dog points steady and true, the next thing you require of him is to back well; and if he is taken out in company with others, this, in its first stage, he will soon learn; that is, he will stop when he sees another do the same, and move on again accordingly: such, in the common acceptation of the term, is called backing, but much more is required to render it perfect. If I have four dogs out, and one of them makes a point, two others, we will say, are in a situation to see and back him instantly, which the third is prevented doing, from some intervening obstacle; in this case stop, and do not move until all are steady; either let him range till he backs to the point, or, if more convenient, drops to your hand. As you approach the dog first-mentioned, all the others should very cautiously do the same, though many people would have them still keep their

places till called to. In my opinion, the beauty of a pointer is in being steady, and yet with all his natural spirit; to be as gallant as a fox-hound, and as docile as a child; to know what he ought not to do, and never refuse doing what he may be ordered.

It should be an invariable rule in breaking, and at the beginning of the season, when birds lie well, to allow *young* dogs to lead up to their game; but as they become wilder, and in more critical situations, it is more prudent, perhaps, to give the reins to an old dog. There is something so beautifully characteristic in the sight of four steady pointers going well up to their game, that it is impossible, either on canvas or paper, to give a just delineation of it. And here I cannot too severely reprobate that restless anxiety of some sportsmen, which induces them to think that their sagacity, in this respect, is more penetrating than their companions; and that the retreat of a bird is more likely to be discovered with the point of a gun, than the natural instinct of sense. It is from such bad and stubborn habits that all dogs are ruined, and in the end appear to have com-

pletely changed their condition: you must expect, that if a pointer is not allowed to exercise his right of search, he will very soon become indifferent to it, and after making his point, leave the remainder entirely to his master. How often does poor Carlo, for such rigid obedience to what has been taught him, receive the kicks and curses of his far more stupid instructor! and with a look of pity, which might well soften a less inexorable heart, vainly plead for that indulgence, which, but for a selfish ignorance, would never have been forfeited!!

At the end of May I leave off taking out my dogs till the middle of July, except for occasional exercise, when I enter upon the more serious process of moor-breaking. To a certain extent my young ones are all steady, at least so far as pointing and backing, and being free from chasing; all the higher qualifications they have yet to learn, but more particularly that of footing. A partridge, except wounded, and this we have not yet had to deal with, seldom runs a great distance, and usually up wind, so that a dog rarely finds any great difficulty in accomplishing his purpose:

on this account it is that pointers are so strangely puzzled when they are first brought upon the moors; for, although they may be admirable amongst partridges, they here change their character entirely, and do not for some time recover from the effects of surprise. A grous, and particularly the male, will frequently run down wind amidst the strongest heath, and over the wettest bogs for nearly half a mile; so that it not only requires sagacity, but the most steady perseverance, to make him out well. A dog that has been broke upon the moors is as different from another as one animal can possibly be. You there see the nature of a pointer in all its best excellence; with a range of ground which his utmost wishes can scarcely occupy, and with an opportunity of taking advantage of the wind at every turn, and in every situation, he freely confides in the superiority of his own powers, unfettered by the constant interruption of a fence on one side, or a dry unprofitable fallow on the other. Nothing will sooner induce a dog to forget, or rather to break through, the rules of discipline he has already been taught, than his first essay upon the moors; and although he may have previously been as steady as a rock,

yet when he suddenly finds himself in the midst of a brood of grous, the cock cackling and running one way, the hen another, and the young ones getting up in every direction, it is generally fear, if he does keep true to his point, which predominates over inclination. You cannot then encourage him too much; language, properly used, is worth all the whipcord in the world; it will both encourage and correct, and will sooner bring any animal under a proper degree of subordination than the most severe flogging. You should endeavour to prevent a young dog chasing on the moors, by every possible means; for, if he once begins, there are so many temptations for him to continue it, especially in a backward season, when birds are small, and their flight slow and short, that all your previous labor will be immediately thrown away.

My plan is, always to hunt those parts first where I am pretty certain of finding no game; this will give a dog an idea of his ground, and also, in some degree, cool that high mettle with which he first set out. I then change my beat, let go an old dog, and take up the others. The first

point is generally decisive; and, if it be at a brood, will materially assist you: let your dogs go up very cautiously; and, to prevent any bad consequences, each should have a collar on, with a piece of strong cord attached to it, of about two yards in length, with a loop at the end to lay hold of; give them the wind as much as you can, and be certain that they know what they are about before you disturb the brood. When the old birds begin running and calling, let them have as full a view as possible, but without stirring an inch; and when the young ones get up, the same, but not, by any means, to allow them to observe where they afterwards drop. If the old cock should have run to any distance, which he generally does, let your dogs foot him to the extremity of it, stopping them at the end of every ten or fifteen yards, to make them more cautious hereafter. Should you have no one with you, yourself must endeavour to mark down one or two of the brood, which is easily done, as they seldom fly above two hundred yards before they have been *much* disturbed. In this case, let go your young dogs, and hunt them round the spot until they come upon the scent, and there allow

them to stand for the space of five minutes; then follow them slowly up, and as you can guess almost to a certainty where the bird lies, if possible, take it under their noses, but having them so secure that you can let it go again without risk of being hurt. Should either make a snatch at it, correct him moderately; words, and a few gentle blows about the mouth, will probably quiet him; at any rate, first try the effect of lenient measures, and at all times proportion the degree of punishment to the excess of crime. After a few such precautionary measures, you may loose your young dogs entirely; but I would not have you immediately give them too great a liberty to range, for fear they abuse the indulgence, and it is a dangerous maxim to trust too much to inexperience: in four or five days this forbearance will gradually cease; and at the termination of three weeks, each will have acquired an instructive confidence to qualify him for more useful purposes.

LETTER IV.

On my return home, I found, to my regret, as well as surprise, that two of my best old dogs had caught the distemper, and to a degree of severity which scarcely left any hopes of cure; my man, however, had very properly confined them in a distant and separate situation, and I trust its further progress is, for the present, put a stop to. This is a species of disorder which no one has yet been able satisfactorily to account for; it spares neither age nor sex, and such dogs as happen unfortunately to be attacked by it, frequently retain its effects to a very distant period. From the nature and manner of its appearance it may fairly be presumed to originate equally from external as internal causes; and, if I may be allowed the expression, both high and low, rich and poor, are

obliged to receive the unwelcome visit. From the efforts which a dog affected with this disease frequently makes to throw off something offensive, it of course follows that the lungs are, in many instances, liable to the disease; and every future symptom must depend upon the method pursued to remove the obstruction.

In all cases of this kind, the remedy which is first applied is the most likely to be effective; and the following, if administered in proper time, I seldom knew to fail. Take of calomel ten grains, and of emetic tartar twenty; let these be made into a large bolus, and divided into twelve equal portions, one to be given every *other* morning fasting. The diet should be warm strong broth; and a single course of this medicine, in the earliest stage of the complaint, will effectually cure it; but should it happen that the disorder has been making for any time a *secret* progress, we must then pursue a more systematic method. The first symptoms are usually similar in all dogs: their eyes become heavy and dull; they suddenly are reduced in flesh, accompanied with a kind of dry husky cough, and an obstinate purging. If these are

not speedily removed, they will be followed by a nasty moisture issuing from the eyes and nostrils, and an agitated motion of the limbs, so that the dog appears scarcely able to support himself. Good air and cleanliness, under these circumstances, are indispensible to a cure; but the dog must not be allowed, on any account, to lie sleeping near a fire, which only feeds the disorder, without any good whatever proceeding from it. A moderate degree of warmth is the best; and should the above recipe, after being twice administered, not have any visible good effect, I would immediately put a seton or rowel, in the neck of the dog, which will give the course of the distemper a different direction, and draw it, at any rate, from the head: the eyes must be kept constantly clean with a sponge and water, and a mixture of warm vinegar and water should also be frequently applied to the nostrils, and remove every filthy appearance from them. Whilst the purging continues, the best food will not in the least improve the condition of the dog, although his appetite may be enormous; he will also, in all probability, continue dull and drowsy, and require some effort to rouse him even to his meals. You may, at times, observe these latter

symptoms before others of a more alarming appearance, as the disorder puts on so many different forms, and continues through such a variety of stages; its effects frequently being confined to an individual, but generally embracing a wider and more destructive range; and, in some instances, it has acquired the character of epidemic. The two most dangerous symptoms are at the beginning excessive looseness, and afterwards fits. So long as the first continues, no medicine will have any effect, and a dog in this state can scarcely ever be persuaded to feed; to remove this, half an ounce of powdered gum arabic, and the same quantity of prepared chalk must be mixed together, and divided into twelve small balls---one, two, or three to be given during the day, until the purging is stopped; I would then decline any immediate medicinal process for a couple of days, during which time isinglass, boiled in milk, and given in small quantities every four hours, will assuredly relieve the dog from the effects of relaxation: the calomel and emetic tartar may be again administered, and under such treatment I have seldom known a dog but which eventually recovered.

Fits are, of all symptoms, the most to be dreaded; and their violence is frequently of that nature as to prove immediately fatal; at least a dog seldom survives after the third. They generally appear when he has made a considerable progress towards amendment, and you are therefore taken more by surprise, and unprepared: a perseverance in the medicine, after a supposed recovery has taken place, is the most likely method of preventing a relapse; and I invariably pursue this system to the extent of three doses, administering one every two days, and taking at the same time especial care to keep the animal particularly warm. If the calomel should operate contrary to your intended purpose, that is, by promoting the purging, it will be adviseable to give the dog about half a grain of opium, in twenty minutes from the time he had the previous dose, being also particularly careful that he is *well* and *warmly* supported. The usual ingredients, which are considered by many to be effective in this disorder, are Æthiop's mineral, syrup of buckthorn, and not unfrequently salt and water: these remedies are, by some, thought so precious and infallible, that they are handed down from father to son, with the same

strict punctilio as the period of his wife's accouchment, and are often found to swell the page of that volume wherein is registered a long line of various ancestry.

The distemper, some years ago, must have been either a very rare disorder, or unaccompanied by those dreadful symptoms which at present characterise it; and it may, perhaps, not be very idle to suppose, that it was occasionally mistaken for the hydrophobia or madness: indeed, in many of its stages, the symptoms are so nearly alike, that a person, either through ignorance or alarm, might shield himself from the accusation of improper treatment, the veterinary art being then not only very partially understood, but as sparingly practised.

To shew you how partial this disease sometimes is, both in the extent and manner of its attacks, I had lately three pointer whelps, of the same litter and sex, (all females) and which had been suffered to remain with the dam, in a large open area in London, until they were three months old; at the end of that period, one of them,

completely of a white color, lost its appetite altogether, and was troubled with a violent sickness and continued purging, so that no physic could be made to act with any the most distant hope of success; a second, nearly all brown, was in three days after, attacked in a different manner, merely by a simple wheezing, or more resembling a slight kind of hiccup, but without her spirits or appetite being in the least diminished; the third, which was of a color betwixt that of the other two, never became visibly affected, or suffered in any degree whatever. To remove the purging was the first object, and this was effected, after considerable application, by the gum arabic and chalk; the sickness disappeared soon after, and the entire cure was effected by three doses of Blaine's medicinal powders; one of these also was administered to the second whelp on the first appearance of the cough, and another removed her out of danger: to guard, however, against any bad effects which might possibly ensue to the third, from being all the time confined together with the others, I first gave her two grains of emetic tartar, and on the morning of the following day one of the powders, repeating this last dose

at the end of twenty-four hours. From the moment of attack to the period of amendment, the above were the only symptoms I could observe; and I have every reason to believe, except in the first instance, that the disorder was not of that excessive description, as I never found the spirits of any one to be in the least degree pulled down. I have mentioned the colors of the whelps, to shew that all opinions (and I know there are such,) upon their hardy or opposite nature, are idle and speculative: it is the inward state of the animal which, at the time, must determine the probable consequences of the disease, but its bad effects will be considerably lessened, and the good ones of the medicine invariably encreased by high and plentiful feeding.

The above treatment was according to the directions recommended by Mr. Blaine, than whom no one is more entitled to the thanks of the sportsman; he has studied the disorders of this animal with a degree of science and perseverance, calculated, I trust, not only to procure him an adequate recompence for his exertions, but a lasting and honorable monument for his humanity.

LETTER V.

August.

We are now in the midst of grous shooting, and finer moors or more favorable weather no sportsmen could ever desire. The house is just large enough to contain ourselves, and half-a-dozen servants, and each man has a separate kennel for his dogs; so that no accident can possibly happen from the introduction of strange ones. We are situated in the very heart of good shooting, and within twenty yards of the door may be found nearly as many broods of moor-game: from the elevated position of our quarters too, we have an almost uninterrupted view, on every side, over ten miles of country; so that no poacher, or other unlicensed intruder, can possibly trespass unobserved, as, by the assistance of a good glass, we can at any time make the discovery. We have

two regular keepers, and four under ones, and I believe they are all as honest as circumstances will admit of; the two former live in the house, and are each of them mechanics enough to repair a gun in case of necessity; for this purpose they have a small forge with the usual apparatus adjoining. The four under keepers live at some distance, and in opposite directions, and come every morning to attend us for the day: in the evening, after shooting, they return; and by this means we have always a person on the look-out for the detection of marauders. On three sides of ours, the neighbouring manors are carefully protected, but that on the fourth is an open one, which of course necessarily requires our more immediate attention; for this purpose one of the head keepers always accompanies the party, who shoots in that quarter, that in case of necessity his authority may be more immediately applied; the other remains at home, to attend to the dogs which are also left there, and have the food and every thing else ready for the reception of the others which are at work.

In our way here, we stopped one night at -------, and as our landlord was something of a sportsman,

he thought it necessary, I suppose, considering the quality of his guests, to dilate more than usual upon his favorite topic. There is generally one inconvenience attending a conversation of this kind, that, as you perhaps pay very little attention to what is said, you give a person every cause to believe that all he advances is perfectly consistent with reason and rule, till he feels so certain of the infallibility of his own doctrine, as to oblige you, probably much against your real inclination, to become a subscribing witness to his maxims. It was thus in the present instance; for, after running on an hour, without a single interruption, about the excellence of his pointers and spaniels, we at length agreed, "carpere viam," to attend him with the former on the following morning. It was seven when we started, and the distance to the nearest good moors at least eight miles; so that the sun had risen considerably in his orbit, and made our host appear much warmer in the cause than he had originally intended. I own I had little hopes of being gratified, for the dogs were all of the Russian breed, and with coats longer than any I had seen; their condition was also much against them, considering the heat of the weather. But

experience is the best proof of excellence, and I was not only agreeably but gladly surprised, for I immediately purchased a brace: they are perfectly steady, with good noses, and high rangers, and feel less inclination for water than any smooth pointer I have. It seems a very erroneous idea, and it is one also which gains daily belief, that this dog should suffer more from heat than our own native breed, merely because the opinion is warranted by appearance. The effects of constitution are here very strikingly displayed; the cold and warmth of Russia are equally oppressive; and nature has, with a munificence truly wonderful, given to the most humble of her creatures the rare power of sustaining the severity of the one, without, in any material degree, suffering from the laxative effects of the other. It is on this account that emigration has so little effect upon the good qualities of a Russian pointer; for, probably, whilst another dog would sink beneath the influence and change of climate, he rises superior to restraint, and braves with equal indifference the snows of Zembla, and the balmy zephyrs of Peru. I must, however, notwithstanding all these rare qualifications, still incline to my favorite breed; and only

in the absence of my two rivals FLIRT and FOP, already spoken of, would I be merely content with the services of BUMPER and BACCHUS. Names more decidedly appropriate to the calling of our host could not have been imagined: and it was, perhaps, a fortunate circumstance for us that he had not better consulted *the honor* of his deity. In one instance, these dogs bear some resemblance to the Spanish breed, being able to hunt without water, but in others, particularly voracity of appetite, they widely differ. A friend of mine, a great sportsman, and who possesses a real Don, has been kind enough to give me a description of his properties, and which, for your satisfaction, I will now transmit to you; his remarks, you will perceive, are dictated partly by the object of my question; viz. What resemblance he bore to Woollett's celebrated engraving of the same species of animal?

"*In color* he is spotted, as you have seen Danes, with this difference, that where their spots are *black*, his are similar to those of a *tortoise shell* cat: on his body they are of various sizes, but on his head very small and numerous, the ground of all being

white. His *nose* not black, but of a flesh-color; his skin delicate and very soft to the touch, more resembling very fine wool than hair, and probably the result of a warmer climate: his *stern* not quite so fine, as if he possessed some distant cross of a setter. His *head* by no means resembles the general idea of a Spanish pointer, heavy like a blood-hound, but is *particularly* light and fine, shewing all the breeding possible, especially in his ears. In height he stands 22 inches; from the nose to the end of his stern, which I think has been shortened, 3 feet 3 inches, and from that point also to the setting on of the latter, 2 feet 2 inches; thus you will perceive that he is rather a small dog than otherwise, without the least *lumber*: he has excellent bone, with round, even, and sound feet; I do not recollect him ever foot-sore. His shoulders are somewhat faulty, being too upright, and he appears in consequence to gallop rather wide before; but I have observed him to hunt longer, and bear more fatigue than any other dog that I have been in the practice of hunting with him, never having been deprived of his services, after once broke to the gun, for a single day; frequently riding at no easy pace, six

miles to my ground, and this in September, for several days together; indeed I never fancied sport without MADRID. His pace, which is fast, he seldom varies, and he is always at work, carrying his head in one position, lofty; his action, when pointing, is perfectly upright; his stern straight and extended, and his head a little higher than when ranging; he never raises a foot, nor in any degree approaches the ground with his body; this attitude, which is altogether handsome, I do not recollect him ever to have deviated from. His nose is certainly superior to that of any other dog in my possession, and still more so in warm weather; but where I find him most useful is, in his being able to hunt without water, which he will do through the hottest day: he was never on the moors; but from his preferring rather a wide range, and being an excellent footer, I think he would be serviceable. I one day, last Summer, shot four couples and an half of young wild ducks to him, all of which he pointed. I believe he stood at the first bird he found, but from the violence of his temper he was difficult to reduce to order, always flying at the face of the person correcting him, but, when once shot over, gave no

further trouble; he is still savage towards strangers and other dogs; and a most voracious feeder, seldom satisfied; I have occasionally fed him on potatoes only.

"It is difficult what answer to give respecting his offspring, as much depending upon the one side as the other; two of my own, however, which I shot over the last season, have fully answered my expectations, as, I understand, has been the case with another which I gave away; these are all which have been tried. They exceed their sire in size, but nearly resemble him in color; I had one very curious, (dead,) black, blue, and white. I have one now, brown, white, and black, and another blue and black. My brother, who brought him from Gibraltar, said his breed was considered scarce, and that it was called the Regent's breed, bespeaking more perhaps the Portuguese than the Spaniard."

Such is a description of the Spanish pointer of the present day, and I have no doubt but the breed may be considerably improved by skilfully crossing it with our own. The two greatest de-

fects are, a savage temper and an enormous appetite; climate may correct the one, but nothing, except the most judicious attention, can finally diminish the other. For this purpose I look upon potatoes as a most unfit expedient; they are not the natural food of a dog, neither do they afford him any nutriment, and serve only to excite a passion which they ought to allay. I have always found, that when dogs have been once got into good condition, by proper exercise and food, it is no difficult matter to keep them so; a very little will then sustain what it has cost but a trifle more to collect: this is the great secret of condition; and though a skin full of horse-flesh may swell out a dog to an enormous size, it will require but a moderate share of exercise to reduce him to a shadow. When they can be got, nothing is so good for pointers as sheep's heads and plucks, boiled to the complete separation of the flesh from the bone, and afterwards mixed up cold, to a proper consistence, with barley meal; the lights, and liver particularly, should be cut small, equally for the purpose of safety in the consumption, and digestion afterwards. Barley-meal given in this way is, in my opinion, preferable to oat-

meal, and possesses as much heart; but it will not bear mixing with warm liquor; and where oatmeal thickens in the boiling, the other becomes considerably diminished. For a number of pointers there would be some difficulty in procuring flesh-food of the above description; in which case, horse-flesh, equally well boiled, is the best substitute; but the reason why I prefer the former is, because it is more nutritious, and there is less required both to satisfy and maintain a dog. Except for the rearing of the animal, milk given alone is bad, for without a sufficient mixture of barley or oatmeal, it causes a continued evacuation, and often to a degree which renders a dog totally unfit for the performance of his duty; thus the officious good-nature of an obliging dairy-maid has unfortunately destroyed many an hour's diversion.

Pointers should always be kept in separate kennels, if not prohibited by the inconvenience of numbers; these kennels should be made of the dryest wood, and roomy enough for a dog to lie down in, in any position, and also to stand in, perfectly upright: by placing them on wooden

rollers you will obtain a twofold advantage, that of raising them a proper distance from the ground, and the being enabled to move them to any place you may desire, as a shelter from the severity of the weather: a large open space should be enclosed within a wall, having a shed around it, and the kennels placed at equal distances underneath, with a separate feeding-trough to each. In the middle of this paved yard should be a pump, to which you may fix a leathern pipe, to distribute the water in any quantity, and in whatever direction you think proper; a vessel perhaps made of cast iron, will be most useful, both for water and food, being light enough to move about; and, if kept clean, sweeter than either wood or stone. The boiling-house should be in an inner court, communicating by a door, and the meat brought from thence, and portioned out in proper quantities to all at once: the door of each kennel should only upon this occasion be closed; and by allowing every dog to feed at the same time, you will prevent any jealousy arising from apparent partiality; each will then more leisurely satisfy himself, and a slow feeder be upon equal terms with a quick one. I never lose sight of discipline upon any

occasion, and it is regularity in the kennel which more generally produces obedience in the field.

An ingenious gentleman in the neighbourhood of Ipswich, and whom I shall have occasion again to mention, has a method of kennelling his pointers, I believe, peculiar to himself, and I have been favored with the following account of it. He fixes in the ground the half of an axle-tree of a cart, chaise, or waggon, with the wheel attached to it, but at such a distance as to preserve its circular motion free and unrestrained: the upper surface of the wheel is then boarded over, and upon this is next placed the half of a wine pipe, or some similar large vessel; a long pole is run through the top of this in an horizontal direction, but extending beyond the basis of the circle; the chain to which the dog is fastened depends from a large iron hoop running up and down the pole, but prevented drawing off by two small pieces of wood fixed transversely at the lower end of it: the kennel thus turning, with very little ease, upon the axis of the wheel, teaches the dog, in a short time, to shelter himself from the severity

of the weather, at the least change of which he never fails resorting to the attainment of his comfort.

LETTER VI.

It is not far from this place where a bet was once decided upon the quantity of grous which one man could kill on the 12th of August; every bird was to be killed fairly and flying, and the number to determine the wager was forty brace. The morning of the day was particularly damp and unfavorable, so that James Croudace, the Earl of Strathmore's keeper, who was the person selected, had, at 8 o'clock, only bagged three birds; but a good breeze soon after springing up, speedily removed every atmospheric impediment, and before three in the afternoon he had bagged forty-two brace and an half: the bet was one hundred guineas, and there is but little doubt that, in the course of the day, he could have killed double the amount. The method, I understand, which they pursued to get so large a

quantity of game together, was to banish, or drive all the broods, when very young, from the high breeding moors down to a smaller space of heath, where there was an abundance of juniper berries, and every thing to attach them from again straying, which was likewise prevented by constantly hunting round and never disturbing that particular spot. The keeper, upon this occasion, used three brace of pointers, and had six double-barrelled guns in the hands of other persons, which he fired almost in immediate and continued succession. This is the largest number of grous which I have ever heard of being killed by a single person in one day in England, though I believe it has been exceeded by the Marquis of H------ in the highlands of Scotland by four brace and an half. We have been here five days, and have killed (four of us) in that time 185 brace, making upon an average something more than nine each day, per man. The weather has already begun to change, and the birds are becoming considerably wilder, both of which circumstances will materially diminish the pleasure of, and probably soon terminate our excursion. An English atmosphere is generally much more favorable to this diversion than an

Highland one, as, from the innumerable lochs and the immediate vicinity of the ocean, the mountains are so concealed in the vapors arising from them, as at all times to render a day's sport extremely precarious. A very little wet soon causes a grous to become wild and unassailable, and the chance of pursuing him to any advantage is very uncertain, until perhaps in the middle of the day, when the sun may establish a temporary influence. His habits are exceedingly regular, always taking his food and water at particular times, the latter at noon: he will then retire to the sunny side of some bank, and beneath the cover of high furz, bask in all the delight of imagined security. If a good shot suddenly come upon a brood in this situation he may very frequently annihilate the whole, for they will immediately separate in different directions, and each bird get up singly, so that he has nothing to do but restrain the ardor of his dogs, and, in some measure also, that of himself. The impetuosity with which many sportsmen, and young ones in particular, travel over their ground, is one great reason why they meet with so little game: they no sooner find a brood, and gain one shot, than they give up every idea of further pursuit, without

ever marking the progress of their flight, or that of an individual, which may perhaps be induced to shorten or vary his from the infliction of a wound. From the circumstance of heath presenting so continued and smooth a surface, and the little variation in every object upon it, it is more difficult to mark down a grous with certainty than a partridge, but by following the course of him carefully with your eye, and afterwards trying in that direction, you will seldom fail of gaining his retreat. It should be a maxim with all sportsmen never to leave a yard of ground untried which is likely to harbour a bird; by this means you will sooner learn the nature of game of all descriptions, teach your dogs a better system of duty, and give yourself a very decided advantage, indeed over every other person who pursues a different method. According also to the number of dogs you hunt at the same time will be your chance of sport: where you possess such a latitude of range, a greater scope is open to your exertions, and as the fatigue of moor-shooting is much more severe than that of any other amusement, you should endeavour by every means to reduce its effects. Two brace of good steady dogs are, in my opinion, the number best calculated for

this purpose, and they will work as long as any gentleman ought to continue out. The plan which many sportsmen adopt, is to shoot with one brace of pointers till the time of dinner, and then take a brace of fresh ones for a couple of hours in the afternoon, working the four alternately morning and evening: this method suits very well with such a system, but there are few men who feel inclined to renew their endeavors after a cool and comfortable repast, and a good fire then becomes a luxury which we are seldom willing to make so immediate and voluntary a resignation of. Provided every dog is tolerably steady, you can scarcely in reason hunt too many together, but where there is a want of discipline, or where it is totally disregarded, it would be absolute folly to use more than one. The opinion which is held by many, of the advantage attending a dog's running up to his game, appears to me a strange subversion of every principle of profit or satisfaction: it totally ruins that cool and even conduct which should characterize a good shot, and excites a contention generally terminating in mutual discontent. The danger also is in many respects not the least objectionable feature, for in the anxiety of the moment you

may forget to uncock the second barrel, and should you stumble, which is by no means an improbability, its contents may be lodged in the first object that unfortunately intervenes: I have known an instance also where, in the struggle for possession, the thumb of the sportsman had nearly been sacrificed to the consequence of disappointment in his dog. There is yet another objection to this mode of breaking, which is perhaps still more serious, and that is the alarm that is given, not only to a single bird, but frequently a whole brood or covey, which instantly take wing, and deprive you of the chance of retarding their flight. I had a dog once sent me which had been broke according to this system, and as there is something rather extraordinary in the mode I pursued to teach him better manners, I will relate it. He had been shot over two seasons; was particularly handsome and well bred, with one of the finest noses I ever knew, and as fleet as a fox-hound: in the morning, when I first had him, which was in September, I took him out alone, and had the good fortune, for it was a very scarce country indeed for game, to find a covey almost immediately; he pointed a moment, and then ran in, but the

birds separated, and the first I afterwards shot at fell within thirty yards, on the opposite side of a wall; I was perhaps long in getting over, for when I did, BEAU had not only swallowed the bird, but the feathers also: to begin a new system of discipline would, I thought, then be premature, as we were scarcely acquainted, and I had the rest of the birds all marked down: I got five more single shots, and killed four, luckily in ground where we were upon more equal terms; the fifth, which went away wounded, he followed with all the impetuosity of unrestricted desire, and actually took a gate flying, and gave tongue like a spaniel; in truth I never in my life saw more determined lewdness. At that moment I was very much in want of a pointer, or I should not most likely have taken the pains with him I did: for the remainder of the month, and the whole of October, I took him out at least five days in every week, with one single, steady old bitch, that would do any thing I bade her: he was never in the least degree tired or distressed, no country was too dry for him, nor any covert too strong, and he gave such decided proofs of natural excellence, that I used every endeavor to restore its lustre. I began with severe measures, for he

was grown too old in iniquity to hope any success from mild treatment; I tried excessive flogging for a fortnight, but that had no effect whatever; in addition to this I made use of a long trash, which a boy laid hold of whenever I fired, and who not only checked his impetuosity, but corrected him well at the same time for displaying it: so long as he was under this immediate restraint, he was more cautious of offending, but from the instant it ceased he resumed his former habits. I next tried a very sharp spiked collar, with the cord attached to it*, and to have him at all times within reach, I loaded him with shot by hanging about two pounds around his neck, so that he might be said to be in a constant state of coercion: finding, however, that all this was mere trifling, and, that after reducing the length of the cord to about two yards, and fastening the end to the middle of a good strong hazle, which had the effect at any extraordinary or improper exertion of pulling him completely over, I

* This is the most severe of all punishments: a single or double row of sharp-pointed nails are fixed on the inside of a strong leather collar, which is made to fasten tight, according to circumstances, and should a dog attempt to break away, the more force he uses the greater will be the punishment, and which a long cord always gives you the power of inflicting.

had not the most distant prospect of remuneration, I was at the point of yielding to necessity, when a circumstance happened which gave me an opportunity once more of trying how far this insubordinate spirit might be reduced: the old bitch began to shew symptoms of approaching desire, and during the period of their amour I allowed him a perpetual and unlimited intercourse with her, keeping him at the same time low in flesh and taking them both out together as usual. In the course of a couple of days I found so decided a change for the better, that I persevered more diligently in the plan of reduction, which at the end of a fortnight had so completely succeeded as to leave me in possession of an animal which, of his kind, was the very best I ever yet saw: the produce also of that litter were invaluable, and required less breaking than any dogs I ever was master of.

LETTER VII.

August.

THERE is something unfortunate, my dear G-----, attending your demands upon me: I have neither the opportunity nor the means of satisfying them all, and you must, therefore, be content to receive, probably a limited account of what it is not in my power more fully to explain. On the moors where I have been shooting there are no black game; the breed has been extinct in Yorkshire for many years, and it is only in that part of Durham bordering upon Northumberland, where there is still a small sprinkling of them remaining. In some parts of Cornwall, Somerset and Devonshire, they are likewise to be met with: on the New Forest, in Hampshire, there may perhaps be two broods in the season, and the Earl of Uxbridge preserves with great care the few he possesses in Staffordshire. The first northern

county which can boast of any quantity is Northumberland, and from thence to the extremity of the Highlands they are found in a greater or less degree, but probably on the Duke of Athol's property, in the neighbourhood of Dunkeld, are more abundant than any where else. I have had the good fortune to meet with a person whose information on this subject has the advantage of five-and-twenty years of local experience, and though, to use his own words, the opinions respecting this particular species of bird are exceedingly various and contradictory, they are, nevertheless, all founded upon conjecture, and of course little deserving of any degree of attention: this will in some measure account for the novelty of many of the following remarks, but as they are strictly confined within the bounds of reality, they will not suffer any unfavourable impression from the speculative opinions of mere scientific adventurers.

In the first place the male and female black game never pair, and, contrary to every rule of gallantry, are never together, except by chance, upon any occasion whatever, if we exclude that single moment when the modesty of the sex is

obliged to yield to the more pressing solicitations of nature; it is this which has acquired the black game the appellation of *chaste*. The two sexes thus live in almost perpetual privacy, without the one party ever disturbing or even requiring the protection of the other. Towards the latter end of April, or the beginning of May, the cocks form themselves into what are significantly termed CLUBS, and to these the hen in the moment of irritation immediately repairs. With extended wings, her breast sweeping the ground, and every "feather fluttering with desire," she marches round the circle, and in all probability from the symptoms which her impassioned conduct excites, selects her mate, as her favors are never granted promiscuously, nor more than once. A connection thus hastily formed is speedily terminated, and she retires to prepare her nest, usually amongst bent or rushes, in which she may deposit the propagation: she generally lays the first egg in a fortnight from the period of connection, and continues almost daily to increase the store to the number of from seven to twelve: should these by any accident be destroyed, she once more repairs to the CLUB, and makes a second proffer of her charms, but under no

other circumstance is the connection renewed that season: she begins to sit immediately she has laid her last egg, and consumes a month in the performance of this duty*. When the young are hatched, her first care is to procure them water, and should it unfortunately happen that the season is dry, or that none is near, they seldom survive the disappointment, but perish in the drought: at three weeks old they can manage to fly about one hundred yards: the color of all at that time, both male and female, is alike grey, something resembling a grous, but lighter: at about eight weeks old the cock begins to change his feathers, and becomes pied, that is, partly black and partly grey, and in four weeks after this he is a perfect black, except the white feathers under his wings and tail, which always remain the same: the color of the hen is invariably that of the poult. When the old

* Perhaps a grey hen sits closer, or, to use the language of the bird fancier, harder than any other of the tribe: an instance once occurred in Northumberland, upon a very bare piece of heath, where a turf-cart, in backing, completely covered her, and if the hinder foot of the horse had but receded one inch more, she would have been crushed to atoms; as it was, nothing in the least alarmed her. We have frequently heard of the head of a partridge or pheasant having been cut off by a scythe, under similar circumstances, but in this case the danger is not so openly manifest.

bird is *on his play*, which is from the middle of March to the beginning of June, his habits much resemble those of the turkey, spreading his wings and tail to their fullest extent: the noise he then makes is loud and powerful, and the modulation it receives from a variety of note renders it altogether far from unpleasant. The estimation in which this bird has long been held, may, in some measure, account for its present scarcity, and for the breed being principally confined within those distant and inaccessible parts of the kingdom which I have before mentioned.

Thirty years ago they were common in Wales, particularly in a high mountain near Abergavenny, called the Sugar-Loaf, and a remarkable circumstance happened to a friend of mine in that neighbourhood, who was a great sportsman, but no shot; he always netted, and for six successive seasons took the same old hen, which he could not mistake, as he put a different mark upon her every time he again set her free, and the last time she became his prisoner, he took six of her young ones: it was ordained, however, that she should not much longer increase the spoils of the

sportsman, for a few days from the period of her enlargement, she fell by the unerring hand of a poacher, who had neither generosity to spare her sex, nor resolution to protect it. A black cock is either very wild, or very tame, and will lie till you kick him up, or rise at a distance which no gun can command: you very seldom or ever get more than one shot at the same bird, except he be wounded, and then the length he will fly sometimes extends far beyond the powers of perception: indeed I have heard it stated by a very old sportsman, that when you have once disturbed a club of these birds, they will rise to that amazing height in the air, as to be completely invisible, and will not again descend until every appearance of what first alarmed them is entirely removed: the same person also assured me, that he has tried this experiment so frequently, by first tarrying some time near the spot, and afterwards going away and returning, when he found, to all appearance, the same society, that he has no doubt whatever of the truth of his observations.

From these characteristic traits you will observe a wide difference betwixt the black game, and all

other birds which come under a similar denomination; and, with your leave, I will now return to those among which we have established an earlier and more general intimacy.

LETTER VIII.

September.

I am happy, my dear G. to find that you still persevere in your intentions, and that we are so soon to have the pleasure of meeting: I cannot promise you any very superior sport, for the partridges around me have not bred so well as I could wish: I will refrain, however, from shooting within one particular district until your arrival, where I hope during your stay you will find tolerable amusement. I am told the season has been generally bad, and that neither in the southern or northern counties is there beyond half the usual quantity of birds. When this is the case with grous and partridges, it is generally to be attributed to the severity of the winter, which either destroys them outright, or makes them an easy prey both to poachers and other vermin equally voracious. A young grous

is so alarmed at the first cover of snow, that he will almost suffer himself to be taken with the hand, and in the depth of winter whole packs will leave the higher grounds and fly for shelter to the adjoining inclosures and farm-yards, where they are frequently to be seen in rows of a hundred perched on the top of a wall, and at those times are not likely to escape the observation of any person disposed to be lawless. As the last winter was not so severe, the scarcity of partridges must be attributed to a subsequent cause, and this, I imagine, is the wet weather which we had at the commencement and during the breeding season: a partridge usually deposits her eggs in a meadow of grass or clover, now and then upon the bank at the bottom of an hedge, but very rarely, or ever amongst corn; the warmth of the sun materially assisting incubation, causes her to select a situation more exposed perhaps than appears consistent with security, but on the other hand there are doubtless much stronger motives which nature has authorised, and which we are forbid to scrutinize. We so frequently hear of the nests of partridges being destroyed, and sometimes even the birds themselves, that I am astonished more pains are

not taken to prevent such careless occurrences: it would be an easy matter by taking an old dog, and trying your grass, or clover meadows, before they have grown too high, to find all the nests they may contain, and you might either fence them off entirely or place some kind of mark to warn your people from approaching too near.

A good breeding season for partridges cannot be too dry, nor can the soil be of too warm or light a nature: the grous, on the contrary, requires moisture, both above and below, and it is the first business of the parent bird to introduce her offspring to this source of future support. All moors, however, are in one degree or other supplied with this element, and to some persons it may perhaps appear strange, how the native inhabitants of a mountain can ever be at a loss to reap the benefit of its productions, especially as their most favorite abode is usually in that district where water is more abundantly supplied. You must recollect that a grous selects a situation for her nest totally removed from all danger, in case of a continued rain, without calculating upon its disadvantages should the season have a contrary tendency, so that the little

temporary pools of water, which, in the one instance, might have afforded her young an immediate relief, are, in the other, no where to be found, and the nearest spring or moss is, in all probability, at too great a distance for so tender a group to reach in safety: but the most dangerous consequence of a dry season originates from the cracks or fissures in the ground, the effect of unqualified heat, and into which the little chicks so frequently fall, without the smallest chance of being released, as either entirely to destroy the brood, or reduce it to that small establishment which we too often see exemplified: from this originates the expression of grous being "drowned in the drought." The highlands are, on this account, much better fitted for the breeding of grous than any lowland moors: the rains there, in the first place, are not so violent; and the constant mist and drizzling showers keep the surface of the ground in such a continued state of moisture, that the power of the sun rarely or ever has the effect of producing the destructive breach abovementioned. These birds usually pair in the first fine weather after February, and continue in that state of amorous intercourse until April, at the latter

part of which month the female lays her first egg, and at the end of sixteen days from that period, the number is finally encreased to ten, twelve, and sometimes fourteen or more; it is a very rare circumstance, however, that a brood is ever found to exceed twelve, including the parent birds, and they may be more generally estimated at eight, nine, and ten: in four-and-twenty days from the task of incubation being first undertaken, the effects of maternal solicitude are, in the previous instance, accomplished; but should it happen, which frequently is the case, that during this process the season should be unfavorable, and a fall of snow chill, as it were, the whole frame of nature, a second offspring must replace the former one, which, on the 12th of August, will scarcely have *put out the black tail*, and consequently afford an easy prey to the voracious appetite of one sportsman or the unskilful pretensions of another.

The habits of a partridge, during the time of pairing, are, in every respect, similar to those of a grous, and indeed to the moment when a greater solicitude is naturally established. The grey hen performs the office of hatching and rearing her

young, entirely independent of her mate: the grous equally share it; but though the female partridge may receive little assistance, in the first instance, from her companion, in the latter it is exclusively his own. In every description, both of the pen and the pencil, that I have had an opportunity of judging from on this head, the young partridges, in their earliest state, have invariably been described as dependent upon the hen; and I should probably lay myself open to considerable censure if I ventured to contradict an opinion so long and thoroughly established, without doing it upon grounds which I trust will, at least, acquit me of wilful misrepresentation.

About six years ago I happened to be at a sea-bathing place, in the North of England, in the months of June and July, and I had with me three brace of pointers, some of which were unbroke. My time was principally occupied in attending to these, and I had a still better opportunity of accomplishing my purpose, as within a few miles there was an unprotected tract of moor, and to which I almost daily repaired. On the edges of this moor, the land, which is generally

the case, was partly in pasture, and partly in tillage, and well stocked with partridges. After my young dogs became in a great measure steady on the moors, I accustomed them to the inclosures, and, in a short time, I knew so well the situation of every covey, that I could direct my steps to eight or ten in succession, and which had bred in the heath. The weather was particularly fine, and I amused myself by sitting down when my dogs pointed, and allowing them to stand for half an hour at a time: the partridges were generally within a dozen yards of me, and always in sight, and it was invariably the case, that the two old birds were at some distance from each other, and the young ones *always* underneath or running over the cock: I thought at first this might be occasioned by the sudden alarm of dogs; but I observed the same thing so frequently, and for such a length of time together, during which my dogs were as still as a mouse, that I am thoroughly convinced the male, at this period, is the principal in office. In every instance too afterwards, at least so long as the covey continue together as one family, the male is always the first to give any alarm in case of necessity: and if they should

be disturbed by a dog in meadow or corn land, before the young ones are able to fly, he goes first to a little distance, and drops instantly, whilst the hen, by her apparent solicitude and even disability to get away, entices an unsteady dog, by every means in her power, to pursue her, till at length having drawn him sufficiently far for her purpose, she returns, by a circuitous rout, to her expecting partner. It is the same with grous in this respect; and when a stranger to such shooting sees an old hen thus exhibiting her seductive artifice, he is frequently tempted to make an effort to secure her himself; in fact, she literally appears to tumble over the top of the heath, but when at a distance of an hundred yards, gives a freer scope to her powers, and leaves her astonished pursuers in utter dismay at their inordinate folly and disappointment. It is on this account, as I have said before, that you should be so careful with young dogs when they are first taken on the moors; and never, by any chance whatever, when they are once become steady to your instructions, hunt them with strange dogs. Nothing sooner ruins a good pointer than this accommodating disposition; for I believe no two dogs in different hands were ever yet broke

alike; and I really advise you, on no account, to let the excuse of "Oh! he'll do no harm," tempt you to hunt yours with others; they cannot possibly do any good, and may entirely overturn that system you had taken such previous pains to make perfect. Some men halloo and swear at a pointer as they would at a hound, and are never satisfied except the whole country are conscious of their approach. In shooting, as in every thing else, nothing more contributes to success than a calm and temperate deportment; and the man who steadily pursues his object, even with only a single dog, will have a much better chance of sport than he who riots in his means: how very superior then must his chance be, who to every superiority of power, unites the rare talent of properly applying it! I must confess, however, that had I the opportunity, I would never use the same dogs both to grous and partridge, but keep a set respectively for each, the two being as distinct in their good properties as a fox-hound and harrier: it is on this account why I prefer a pointer on the moors to a setter; the action of the one is all dash and animation; he carries his head in a posture that inspires the highest confidence; he recovers any mistake

in a moment; and when he stands, you may safely calculate upon the chance of a shot: whereas the tame and cautious action of the latter keeps you constantly alive to anxiety and fear; he ranges without assurance, and stops in dismay; and his natural propensity to creep and fawn is more calculated to excite distrust than encourage desire. Nevertheless, do not let my opinion, at any time, deter you from accepting a good dog, whatever may be his breed or color: I only give you my ideas of a perfect animal; and in the event of being obliged to breed or buy, I should principally confine myself to these particular points.

LETTER IX.

In regard to your question, my dear G--------, "of the distance at which a gun *ought* to kill?" I shall find some difficulty in answering it satisfactorily, there never having yet been an instance, I believe, of any man being so thoroughly pleased with a piece, as to pronounce her infallible; each person usually considers his own the most deserving of applause, but should any unfortunate disappointment induce him to alter his opinion, he forgets, in the immediate moment of irritation, all past services, and indignantly rejects the fair and probable offer of future ones. Many a gun has thus been prematurely dismissed by one for incontinence, and afterwards retained by another, to a period of employment which is generally considered the best proof of excellence. The shooting

of every gun depends much more upon the sportsman himself, than either the maker or the destructive materials appertaining to it; and there are no individuals in the land, who more undeservedly suffer from the ridiculous aspersions of prejudice and folly, than the gun-smith, and the manufacturer of powder: in fact, they occasionally receive the unqualified abuse of every little being who fancies himself authorized in pulling a trigger; and when ignorance chuses to assert her opinions, there are few, I believe, beyond her own immediate circle, who have at any time cause to rejoice in the disclosure. No species of weapon has, of late, made such a rapid progress towards perfection as the one at present under consideration: it has, indeed, exceeded the limits of probability, and can scarce be expected to rise much higher in the estimation of the sportsman: equally fortunate would it have been, if our efforts to preserve had kept pace with those to destroy; but so long as the poacher is suffered to invade, with impunity, the rights of his superiors, conscience alone will be but a slender bar to impede the progress of dissipated inclination.

Netting has now become obsolete: thirty years ago it was the principal mode of stocking a larder, and so long as the season allowed of its being pursued with success, a most destructive species of warfare. In those days a good shot was a miracle; but as the net became an object of minor concern, the gun encreased in general estimation, so as not only more materially to interest the sportsman, but likewise very seriously to assist the revenue of the country. The common fowling-piece had originally no lock, and required the assistance of a lighted match to be used with any probability of success: how uncertain this must have been we can very easily imagine; and it is no wonder that when this first improvement had been adopted, others of course followed in succession. Accordingly, quickness in shooting was but a prelude to strength, and various attempts were then made to establish this principle upon an unerring and less extensive foundation. For this purpose was the hollow or patent breech invented, which, with a less quantity of powder, might produce an equal degree of force. Most of our latter improvements have been principally confined to this object, and it was not until a very few years ago, that any attempt was

made to render the lock of a gun water-proof: since this was first thought of, the efforts of ingenuity have had, but occasionally, a short repose; and almost every gun-smith has now a plan of his own, which he affirms is effective. We are all so wedded to our own opinions, that, and especially where interest is at stake, it is not marvellous we should hear and witness such decided contradictions: if it were possible to manufacture gunpowder without a portion of saltpetre, there then might be a chance of an efficient preventive to wet or damp; but as it is not very probable that a substitute will be found to answer this end exactly, we must still continue to labor under a disadvantage which we cannot remove. The principle upon which it has been attempted to remedy this inconvenience, has invariably been that of making the communication betwixt the prime and the load air-tight; or, in other words, to fix the pan so close to the barrel, and the hammer upon it, as to prevent the possibility of the introduction of any external air: for this purpose, the seat of the hammer has been armed with both cork and leather, as yielding to a very slight pressure, and effectually filling up any casual vacuity. It will

be obvious to every one, that each of these systems is bad; in the one there is danger, and in the other absurdity; for cork, in a few times quick firing, will certainly be liable to retain some portion of it; and the quality of leather is such, that it will always attract, and never repel damp; consequently it is liable to all the objectionable part of gunpowder, so that every time the pan is exposed to the air, the disadvantage is increased in a double ratio.

There are, and have been, various ingenious methods to prevent wet from penetrating the pan, but under every present circumstance, it is a total impossibility to exclude the damp; and until the atmosphere is deprived of those particles of air which constitute its gravity, we must remain at a very considerable distance from the accomplishment of our wishes. The latest improvement of this kind which has been attempted, is by a gentleman from Ipswich, and for which he has obtained a patent: it is much upon the same principle, except that the pan is affixed to the barrel, and the intercourse between the load and the prime communicates by a tube, and the hammer,

the seat of which is armed with leather, falls over the whole: this has already met with great encouragement; and the experiments that have been made upon it have been so much approved, both by military and other persons, that its adoption in the army, I am told, is to be the consequence.

Almost every gun-smith has a method peculiar to himself of boring his barrels, and each is to have a similar effect; viz. that of shooting strong, and throwing their shot regularly, and within a proper compass: one man will widen his more towards the breech, a second nearer to the centre, and a third within a few inches of the muzzle. Reason certainly directs, that any body moving in an uninterrupted straight line, will more indubitably attain the object immediately in opposition; and, for this purpose, a rifle-barrel will throw a ball with greater accuracy than a common one: a perfect cylinder is the idea which naturally suggests itself, as the form for the interior of a barrel; and any alteration which is made in this must be for the purpose of giving as much power as possible to a body, which, when free from restriction, is not actually con-

densed. If, therefore, it be absolutely necessary to open a barrel, I would do it more immediately towards the muzzle, as, in case the direction of the charge be properly ordered, there will be no apparent obstacle to retard its passage; and a charge of shot being supposed to move within the compass of a circle, the great secret is to have this so circumscribed, that a body of air shall not, till within a certain distance, oppose any more powerful resistance. The quantity of powder which a gun will take depends entirely upon the size and construction of the breech, and that of the shot must bear an equal proportion: there is a certain charge which suits the size and substance of every barrel, and to deviate, in any degree, from this, I think, is not an advantage; although many people I know are very partial to a small increase of powder, especially when game become wild and strong. As it is not in the power of every person to purchase more than one gun, such ought to consider his own individual convenience, and if a double, the most useful for his purpose will be 2 feet 6 inches in the barrel, and of an 18 guage in the bore; if a single, the length of the barrel should be 2 feet 8 inches, and 15 in the

bore: the former of these will weigh six pounds and three quarters, and carry two drachms of powder, and one ounce and a half of shot; the weight of the latter will be about five pounds and three quarters, and carry two drachms and a half of powder, and two ounces and a quarter of shot; and for every size in the bore above another, there should be an additional weight in the barrel of an ounce and a quarter; and to every inch in length, one ounce and a half*. The form and size of the touch-hole is apparently a matter of small moment, but more is depending upon this than the generality of people are, perhaps, aware of: the communication betwixt the prime and the load cannot, with any degree of safety, be too near, for the quicker the discharge after the piece has been properly levelled, the more destructive will be the consequence: to obtain this in a still greater measure, and to di-

* There is no general rule for the loading of any gun, and what I have stated is merely the probable quantity which will best suit that weight of metal: two single barrels may be manufactured by the same person, and similar in every respect, and yet one shall shoot well with three drachms of powder, and the other with two; and again, a 17 guage barrel shall only require one half the quantity of powder that suits a barrel five sizes less, so that the proper load for every gun can only be found out by skilful and repeated trials.

minish the effect of the re-action, I would have the touch-hole moderately large, and proceeding rather more in a transverse line, so that the fire from the pan may operate at the lower extremity, and not in the body of the charge: by this means every grain of powder will explode in a similar direction, which cannot possibly be the case if you vary the mode of ignition, except it could be done in a direct line with the charge itself. It is natural, when we throw a stone, to aim expressly at the object which we contemplate striking, and not by making it rebound from the right or the left, to give it a direction immediately in advance; the same rule, in my idea, must determine the explosion of a gun, and though the difference in point of time, according to the present method, is perhaps so trifling as scarce deserving of consideration, still there is an atom of it lost which cannot be regained but by the method above-mentioned. The complaints which are so frequently made about the stock of a gun, I believe to possess more real truth than any other on the subject; for although every person flatters himself with being fully able to determine betwixt the good and bad qualities of a long and short stock; there are, never-

theless, very few who have a perfect comprehension upon the matter. It is the action of the sportsman at the time of shooting, which must determine this point; and therefore to say, that because a gun mounts, or comes well up to the shoulder, at a moment when every object is indifferent to you, it necessarily follows that it will answer equally well in the field, is ridiculous and absurd: an old sportsman has certainly a better chance of suiting himself in this way than a young one, and may not get wrong, but the latter will find himself egregiously deceived. There is in shooting, and at the moment of raising the gun to the object, a kind of sympathy betwixt the sense of feeling, and that of seeing, totally inseparable; and I have no doubt but that, in an open space, as the bird ascends, the point of the gun is perfectly on a level with it, and never varies from that position, until the direction be altered on its reaching the shoulder: the circumstance of a gun's going off in this intermediate position has happened once or twice to myself; I have also seen it befall others, and invariably the bird was killed: it appears to me, therefore, that, as the hand in this case is so entirely subservient to the eye, there will be less likelihood of any

interruption, by raising the gun from an advanced than a contrary position; and the elevation of the piece will not be so materially varied by drawing the but back to the shoulder as it would if propelled forwards, so that a stock of a moderate length will be found more serviceable than one in either of the opposite extremes.

These are my ideas of a gun; but to be able to make a good and proper use of it can only be attained by unwearied practice: and here let me add, that of all modes which are at present resorted to for the purpose, no one is more unsportsmanlike, unmanly, and unnatural, than that of pigeon-shooting; it is one of the most wanton exposures of cruelty and oppression that unhappily tarnishes the character of mankind; and it may truly be termed, "nostri infamia secli." But I am, perhaps, exceeding the limits of reality; the system has not yet become universal; and let us hope that there are those who can kill time more profitably, than by thus sporting with the existence of that little innocent being, which formerly sealed the union of reconciliation between man and his Creator.

LETTER X.

The months of October and November afford all the amusement that a sportsman can possibly desire: every thing then combines to favor his pursuits; and that æra may truly be termed the heyday of enjoyment. Great as the anxiety is which usually prevails when the season for shooting approaches, we seldom find our expectations fully realized: we hail the 12th of August, and the 1st of September, with an ardor too great for continuance: the wet, the heat, the disappointment in the quantity of game, something or other always arises to damp our desires, and too sadly remind us, to use the words of an elegant writer, "that the hours we pass with happy prospects in view are more pleasing than those crowned with fruition." It is only after this too greedy appetite has

abated that we really begin to enjoy the trigger, and are satisfied of the fallacy of our former schemes.

In October, the weather, though generally in this country fine and open, is yet not so oppressively hot as in the two preceding months; the autumnal breezes impart their invigorating assistance, and give a new life to every object around: the earth retains a greater portion of refreshing dew, and no longer presents an obstinate and unprofitable surface; all game are then on the move, and we are no longer obliged to search for them in places as impenetrable to the sportsman as the overpowering heat from which they have escaped. Grous, partridge, pheasant, hare, nothing comes amiss, and all are attainable; for the first-mentioned bird, if he has not been disturbed since August, will now lie as well on a fine day, as he would at the commencement of the season; and in point of excellence there is no comparison. The common weight of an old cock grous, in August, is about 23 ounces, though I have killed them as high as 26; and I know an instance of one being shot, in Yorkshire, which, even after it had tra-

velled to London, in the hottest weather imaginable, weighed 30 ounces. They continue to encrease in size and fulness of feather until November; and then, in my opinion, have a nobler appearance than any other description of game whatever: to pursue them, however, with any chance of success, so late in the season, your method must be entirely altered, and you cannot go about it too quietly. A good stout single-barrelled gun, that carries a large charge, and one steady old dog, will be the most effective; and to have a still greater advantage, you should select the middle of the day, when the sun is in his full power, and the morning of which has been frosty. There is every excuse for a person in this case using all the means which ingenuity and experience may suggest: you will see, perhaps, a pack of grous running from you, at the distance of five hundred yards, and it would be the height of imprudence to follow them up, under the idea of being able to get a shot; probably at the next step you took, they would all rise together and fly for a mile, and would invariably serve you in the same manner, if in a similar way pursued: there are various stratagems made use of, both to draw

them to you, and to induce them to lie till you can come within shot; to attain the first, you are either to go by a circuitous rout, and secrete yourself behind a wall, or in a pit, in the exact line they are running, and await their approach; or you are in this situation to endeavor to hasten it by imitating the noise they make, and calling them to you; but in this case there should always be another in company to remain in or near the place you first went from, that their attention may be principally confined to him, and taken off from you: in order to make them lie, your dog must bear the principal part; for upon seeing them on foot, if he goes round, and stands in the face of them, they will stop instantly, and four times out of five allow you to get within shot: this qualification, however, is what I would have no dog of mine taught that I had the least regard for: if your establishment of pointers will allow it, all very well; but dogs, in general, are naturally enough inclined to grow cunning, without their being educated to it: all poachers' dogs have a happy method of thus getting round their game, which is alone a sufficient and convincing proof of how efficacious it may be made. Let me advise you,

therefore, never on any account to buy a pointer without first seeing him out and in company; in fact, I would always have him a week upon trial, for in a less time you cannot possibly become acquainted either with his faults or perfections. I once gave a dog away that I had tried for a whole season, and could make nothing of; for, except he was worked from morning till night, six days out of the seven, he was perfectly unmanageable: the man who took him was a breaker, and one of the greatest slaves in his profession that could possibly be, so that he found him rather a useful dog than otherwise: I had occasion once to send for him to HARROWGATE to see his dogs, and amongst the rest he brought my old friend RAKE, of which he gave me the same account as I have done; he was handsome and well-bred, which happily attracted the notice of a South Country visitor, who, I suppose, as it was in the evening, imagined the best way of qualifying bad port was by giving ten guineas for a bad pointer.

The pheasants this season have bred most plentifully, which, considering the scarcity of partridges, may, to those unacquainted with the nature of the

bird, appear strange. One might imagine, from the different periods at which the shooting partridges and pheasants commence, that the former was the earlier breeding bird of the two, which is not the case: they both prefer the same kind of ground, only the pheasant must have more wet in the winter, with a proportion of covert; the partridge, perhaps, pairs earlier than other birds, and by remaining longer as it were in a state of negative celibacy, seems to enjoy that "sincera voluptas," of which we are seldom permitted to partake, without having some anxiety about the eventual consequences. The constancy of the cock pheasant is at all times doubtful; for, except the two sexes chance to meet in a strange country, and separated from others of the species, no reliance can be placed upon the durability of his attentions; indeed, he partakes of all the variety of Eastern voluptuousness, and, in the full pride of Asiatic indulgence, assumes to himself the right of bestowing his favors promiscuously, and at will: it is on this account why the shooting a hen pheasant should be so strictly prohibited, as one male bird is sufficient to stock any country, provided he is not denied the opportunity. It appears somewhat

strange that the destruction amongst both partridges and grous should be so equally divided as to sex, that, at the beginning of a season, there is seldom an instance of either a solitary or supernumerary individual: I do not know that I ever heard the subject mentioned: it affords matter, I think, of curious enquiry; for even suppose that, at the period of hatching, there is an equality of each sex, the destruction which afterwards ensues is general and unrestricted, and no favor can possibly be shewn; is it the case then that the possession of a partner depends upon superiority of strength, and that the vanquished yields but with his life: or that, disappointed in his best and dearest wishes, he submits to a necessity which patience cannot cure, nor hope sustain?

In a country that is not thoroughly well preserved, it will be found difficult to keep pheasants together, after they have been once disturbed: so long as any quantity of beans remain standing, or that any covert be left them in the open, they will not be induced to stray; but the moment they are expelled from these, they seek the nearest

wood, and there remain, except occasionally coming out to feed, until a similar circumstance disperse them again: half an acre of buck-wheat sown near the skirts of a covert, and two or three small ricks of barley placed in different situations within, is a plan, which those who are anxious to obtain a good preserve, invariably pursue: indeed, there have been instances where this lure was so successful, as to stock one, at the expence of an adjoining manor; but, in every case of this kind, an individual wood should be set apart as sacred, and on no account must a gun be suffered to be fired in it: you may occasionally, twice or thrice perhaps in a season, beat it well to force the game into the inclosures; but even this must be done with due caution, and no dog, a spaniel particularly, should be permitted to assist: a pheasant, and most other birds, will return shortly to the place from whence they were sprung, if not alarmed by the pursuit or barking of a spaniel; for though more domesticated in his habits than any other of the game species, a pheasant is still of a very shy nature, and when once frightened, not easily reclaimed: for this description of shooting I would therefore always use setters;

they are stronger than a pointer, and more proof against thorns and wet, and may also, with very little trouble, be taught to fetch and carry, so that you will seldom lose a bird in the thickest covert; and if a cock pheasant happen only to be slightly wounded or winged, he will frequently employ your best endeavors a full hour before they finally prevail in recovering him; there can be no excuse for a man who shoots a hen pheasant; nine times out of ten it is done wilfully, and he must be a bad subject indeed who cannot be restrained from indulging so trivial a gratification by any law but positive interdiction.

The quantity of woodcocks which now annually explore their passage to this island, is not near so considerable as it formerly used to be, and various reasons have been assigned as the cause; but I believe the only real, and certainly the most probable one is, that in those countries where this bird breeds, its eggs have lately been sought after with great avidity, and are considered the highest luxury, being exposed for sale in the same way that plover's eggs are with us: they bear a price proportionably high; and it is therefore no won-

der that, amongst a people where poverty is more general and oppressive, greater pains should be taken to alleviate the burthen, especially as the individual may sustain the endeavor without risk of undergoing much fatigue.

It was no uncommon thing, thirty years ago, at a place called NEW-BRIDGE, in GLAMORGANSHIRE, to see five or six cocks on wing at the same moment; and to kill ten or fifteen couples was not thought an extraordinary day's work; I met with an old farmer some time since, in that neighbourhood, who recollected the circumstance of a man once killing five-and-twenty couples within the space of a few hundred yards; but this happened upwards of half a century ago, and at that season of the year when a number had collected together, for the purpose of revisiting their native land. At present, and indeed in every successive year, the scarcity becomes more apparent; so that in those districts where there used to be a superabundance, the coverts are, in a great measure, deserted.

The woodcock is first seen in this country in

October, and the period of his coming depends upon the full of the moon; if this take place in the earlier part of the month, the flight will not be so considerable as it would have been if longer deferred; and until a similar change in this planet, you merely now and then meet with one solitary bird: a second and a third flight, under this circumstance, invariably follow the first, but which, if protracted, I do not think is ever succeeded by more than one, and each is confined to the same period in its passage, which will be considerably accelerated, if, during its continuance, the wind be northerly, and the atmosphere foggy. On their first arrival, they scatter themselves in a variety of directions, but do not immediately repair to the woods, preferring rather the summits and sides of hills, and the thickest hedge-rows, over which may occasionally be scattered patches of fern and furze, always fixing their abode near a spring or runnel of water; in a few days they change their habitation, and continue in the larger coverts so long as the weather is open; but if the first is so severe as to deprive them of the means of support, they fly off to the neighbourhood of the sea, or other places, where the powers of congelation have

had less effect. I have known a whole tract of country, which one day was well stocked with cocks, on the next literally deserted, solely from this cause: it is on this account why we have so slight a dependence upon ever finding a woodcock; for, except wantonly disturbed, he never lies but in the night, and his excursions are seldom confined within the same space. Solitary, however, as are his habits, he is not altogether heedless about comfort: and although his haunts are frequently impervious to man, they are never so situated as to be totally so to the sun. I have always found a warm bank, that is open to the south, the most favored retreat; and as every district has its particular spot, where, on a cock's first coming, he is invariably to be found, the situation of it, in my experience, has always been as I have described, and sheltered from the North.

From the circumstance of this bird being migratory, he is not included within the prohibitory mandates of the game laws; and being in much esteem as a delicacy for the table, the measures which are taken to procure him are numerous and successful: but as the use of a gun would

subject the person to a penalty, if not otherwise properly qualified, although the object of his pursuit be not game, he is obliged to have recourse to other expedients. Amongst these, springes are in considerable repute, and are found very efficacious in taking both woodcocks and snipes; the method is simple, and can scarce fail of success against birds of such a silly and insignificant character: you first of all find out the places where they feed, which are generally at the head of a spring, or in its source; the springes are made of two strong hairs running through a noose, and fastened to a small hooked piece of stick, which is fixed in the ground, so that the snare may lie about an inch from the surface; a variety of these are placed in different quarters, and it generally happens that the birds are caught by the neck; but except merely for the sake of gain, it is the worst possible method of taking them, for during the time that any animation is left them in this situation, they never cease fretting to a degree, which, when taken out, will be found to have reduced them to a skeleton; and this is the cause why we observe so great a disparity amongst birds of this description that are exposed

for sale: the common size of a woodcock is ten ounces and three quarters, varying a little occasionally each way: and a friend of mine, last season, killed one, a perfect prodigy, that weighed fourteen ounces; but a bird that has been taken in the manner above described, will scarce weigh eight: and, indeed, when we know that at every successive flight he loses some part of his good properties, no wonder that they should be so greatly diminished from continual fear.

Pursued in a proper manner, there is no shooting which pleases me so much, after the moors, as cock-shooting: with good spaniels, it combines all the harmony and enterprize of fox-hunting; and I had much rather kill two couples of cocks in a day, than ten brace of partridges or pheasants: it is, in a plentiful country, the most delightful recreation; the scenery heightens your satisfaction, and the inequality of the country animates you to conquest; the echo of triumphant success rouses every dormant energy, and the varied agitation of hope and fear inspires you with the double resolution of accomplishing the one.

and overcoming the other. Far different are the feelings which predominate when this diversion is pursued as is generally done in Wales: a man there goes unattended, except by a single old miserable-looking dog, half setter, and half—heaven knows what! with a bell hanging round his neck; his gun is not much longer than a common horse pistol, and his figure altogether more resembling that of Robinson Crusoe, than a liege subject of the House of Brunswick: in this manner accoutred, skulking along with all the circumspection of suspicious treachery, the "par nobile" try every hole likely to harbour a feather: at length the bell ceases, and the *creeping* marksman cautiously explores his passage to the spot; his eye seldom errs in pointing out to him the object of his search; and destruction, nine times out of ten, is the consequence, before the bird is roused from his stupor. Thus going from one covert to another, and encreasing his success at each, the wary Welshman, even in these days, frequently returns with six or seven couples of cocks, which, together with a brace or two of partridges, and a leash of hares, are

offered for sale with the same lawless indifference, but selfish feelings, that urge him to the disposal of his mutton or his corn.

SIR,

After your readiness to oblige me in the former part of your work, I should consider myself but ill deserving of any future notice, if I withdrew my promised correspondence. There are few men, perhaps, who would make a *voluntary* confession of their misfortunes; the world, in general, are too prone to the concealment of error, and forget that the acknowledgment of a trivial fault, might probably prevent the repetition of another more seriously pernicious. We have daily, and indeed hourly, opportunities of confirming this opinion, and how few there are whose friendship will hazard the experiment of restraining our follies, or directing our pursuits. There is no greater pest in society than an officious, yet indifferent, friend; one whose offers of service are unlimited, but whose feelings are absolutely neutral: looking up to him, perhaps, as the standard of excellence, and the mirror of truth, we are hurried on by a too confident security, into a sea of trouble, beyond the

power of redemption, and look in vain for that hand as a rescue, which had heretofore acted the conductor.

I was led into this train of thought from a circumstance which has happened since you did me the honor to acknowledge the receipt of my last, and which that letter, in a great measure, produced. It was not difficult to foresee that my angling would turn to very little account, and I therefore resigned the pursuit of it early in the season; as it was, however, necessary to fill up the interval betwixt that time and the Autumn with some species of amusement, I naturally looked forward to a preparation for the field as the most likely to afford it, and I accordingly gave out that I wanted some pointers. The necessities of an individual are seldom regarded if he has no means of recompensing the person who shall endeavor to relieve them; but as the doubts of many had already been satisfied upon this head, I was soon surrounded with such a host of friends, as would have induced many people to think that I had retained the whole country in my service. I had always understood the word pointer to belong to a

certain class of dogs exclusively appropriated to the purposes of shooting, but there was such an indiscriminate use made of it upon this occasion, as really staggered the opinion I had so long supported; in fact, there appeared an universal parentage: some with long tails and some with short, and not a few without any---some with ears like a blood-hound, and others again scarcely observable; their colors too were as profuse as a lady's wardrobe, and, from the texture of their skins, they were adapted to sustain the varied temperature of any climate; but the most astonishing of all was, their equally good and surprising qualities. Not knowing, therefore, at all how to act under these circumstances, and having also become perfectly conscious of my late extreme folly, I determined to have the benefit of a trial, at least, before I ventured on the authority of report; accordingly, the following morning was fixed upon for our excursion, and at the appointed hour we all sallied forth. Had it not been that the people in this country are seldom alarmed by strange appearances, I should have thought we were proper subjects for apprehension; but as there is rarely a disposition to plunder without hopes of adequate remunera-

tion, we went on our way unsuspected. The number we mustered, men and dogs, was near thirty; and such an odd mixture of names as was never before collected together: there was CATO eager to outstrip NERO, and PLUTO yielding to the superior power of SANCHO; JUNO resigned the sceptre to DIDO, who, in her turn, disputed the palm with MILO: there was a DASH without spirit, and a FOP without affectation---a NELL all meekness and compliance, and a BELLE unconscious of her charms!

The powers of such an unnatural assemblage did not long remain inactive: and the little respect which each appeared to have for the other, gave me as quick an insight into the principles of republicanism, as a meeting of *choice spirits* at the CROWN AND ANCHOR or PALACE YARD. We continued out for some hours, but all was bustle and confusion; one dog pointed up wind, when another was coming down: some of them were three fields a-head of us, and it was with difficulty we could persuade others to keep pace with ourselves; while the mice, larks, and hedgehogs, that invariably attracted the attention of them all, gave

me at length some idea of what a dog ought *not* to be: it was about this period I was accosted first by one person and then by another, begging me to see *his* dog out alone, when there would be no doubt of my being satisfied, that an unfortunate hare, alarmed at the approach of so many of her direst foes, jumped up in the midst of them all: if any circumstance more than another could have added to my amusement, it was this: all idea of discipline was at an end, and the whole not only joined in the pursuit, but it was rendered more extraordinary by a mixed and indiscriminate cry. The situation I was in afforded me an opportunity of seeing the whole chase, and until the game arrived at a small coppice, where she unfortunately squatted, her pursuers were left at a considerable distance in the rear: no sooner, however, was this observed, than the place became instantly blockaded, and if poor puss attempted an escape at one corner, she was immediately hallooed back to another; till, after being literally mobbed to death, and completely exhausted, she yielded, with a sad reluctance, to a small terrier, which, twice before during the day, had drawn off our attention by the slaughter of a mole and a

water-rat. The party, as I was afterwards informed, adjourned to a neighbouring ale-house, where the spoils of the morning soon appeared in a character that once more gave employment to the powers of demolition. As for myself, I had seen enough to deter me from making a bargain with any one; my knowledge of a pointer was not so confined but that I knew he should possess that quality which his name implies, and I had yet seen no symptoms that could induce me to think any one of them was at all that way inclined. I therefore returned home much better satisfied than if I had been tempted to venture upon a recommendation unsupported by proof.

I was sitting, ruminating upon the past, and looking, with some anxiety, towards the future, when my servant announced the arrival of Mr. H------, and the next moment he made his appearance: I own I was at first surprised to receive a visit from one with whom I was totally unacquainted, and instantly attributed it to some mischance attending my newly-finished excursion; for though hitherto a perfect stranger to his person, report was by no means idle in publishing his

character: this gentleman was about fifty-five years of age, stout and overbearing in his appearance, but open and familiar in his address; he was a sportsman of the first class, and as he came habited in character, his introduction was divested of much of that ceremony which generally precedes a first acquaintance: there was no time for apology on either side, for our hands were naturally held out to each other, and a good hearty shake from both established an immediate and mutual confidence. Our discourse quickly turned upon the sports of the field, and he then declared, that having heard I was partial to such amusements, and intended to commence shooter, he had taken the liberty of calling upon me to offer his services, in putting me into a proper method of forwarding my wishes: I could not help feeling highly flattered with his attention, for I had yet received no similar civility from any other of my neighbours, and I judged there was something more in this than appearances warranted. I was not mistaken, for, in the course of conversation, I learnt his grandmother was an Englishwoman of considerable distinction, and his partiality for that people had induced him to pass

over the cold punctilio of Cambrian politeness, and to step forward in a more natural and enlightened character.

It would be teazing your patience to relate all that passed on the subject of sporting; I found myself completely ignorant of its most trifling features; and when I mentioned the circumstance of the hare, which had that morning occurred, he laughed most heartily, and congratulated me upon an escape under such happy circumstances, for had the chase been unsuccessful, it is ten to one but half the farmers in the country would, the next morning, have made a demand upon me for damages for ducks, chickens, and turkeys. We have agreed that I shall attend him whenever he goes out with his dogs; and as the season will not commence for some weeks, I hope to gain considerable profit from his instructions, so as to enable me, at some future period, to give you a more full and satisfactory account of your friend,

THE TRIGGER.

END OF PART II.

W. Wilson, Printer, 4, Greville-Street, Hatton-Garden, London.



J.Ward R.A. pinx.

Letters on Sporting.

PART III.

COURSING.

LETTER I.

November.

In retracing the different and progressive periods of life, we naturally look back to that portion of it, when allured by the tempting offers of heretofore restricted pleasure, we seized the first opportunity of gratifying the impulse of our wishes; and when spurning the dictates of sober admonition, we prized the present moment more for the sake of actual enjoyment than future profit. The impressions which we receive in infancy are not without difficulty effaced, and the pursuits of youth in almost every age have established a similar charac-

ter*. I will not pretend to determine how far the manners of a people are affected by different systems of government, or the influence of climate, nor whether the latter has the same effect upon the animal as it possesses over the vegetable creation: it is sufficient for our present purpose to know that an Englishman lives under the happy enjoyment of both, and where the wise and beneficent attributes of the one, allow all the indulgence which can possibly be incited by the ascendancy of the other.

Amongst the various employments which have occupied the attention of man, the CHASE has ever sustained a principal share, and its votaries, whether for the sake of defence, profit, or amusement, have constantly ranked in a superior class: fortunately for us it is not subject to those molestations in this country which somewhat obscure its

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* Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,
Gaudet equis, canibusque, et aprici gramine campi. HORAT.
Ita est,
Quod plerique omnes faciunt adolescentuli
Ut animum ad aliquod studium jungant: aut equos alere,
Aut canes ad venandum, &c. &c. TERENT. IN ANDRIA.

character in more distant climes; and we are suffered to participate in all its best pleasures without the apprehension of any evil consequences, except what may arise from the ordinary casualties of headstrong temerity or unnecessary fear. Within this circle of the chase the HARE is an object which at first view, and indeed, upon deliberation, appears more calculated to excite our pity than arouse the attacks of persecution: her character is marked by every trait of harmless simplicity, and even in her attempts to evade the wanton diligence of pursuit, there is an uniformity of acting which agreeably coincides with all the conspicuous semblance of her nature: self-gratification, however, so frequently leads us into inconsistent errors, that upon a comparative statement of its effects, we shall not in this instance, perhaps, find ourselves such egregious offenders.

To enumerate all the methods, my dear G——, which have been successively adopted for the destruction of this animal, I shall not attempt, but confine myself solely to that which we distinguish by the name of the LEASH or COURSING. This is a diversion of undoubted antiquity, and historians

have not been wanting to inform us of its institutes. Amongst these the two most conspicuous are XENOPHON and ARRIAN, the former of whom flourished in the year B. C. 359, and the latter A. D. 161. Much however as they differ from each other in form and regulations, there is nevertheless sufficient evidence to convince us that each came originally under the same denomination; and if that described by the last mentioned author bear a nearer affinity to our ideas of COURSING, the change in the system must perhaps be attributed to the different characters of those nations whose manners are respectively delineated. The characteristic trait of every people indulging in luxury, and on the verge of a decline, is invariably that of apathy and indifference; a wish perhaps to reap the reward of power without the proper ideas or inclination to exert it; hence we may account for the use of XENOPHON's *nets*, and by a contrary elucidation, for the more liberal and honest stratagems of the GAULS. Indeed after a lapse of above 1600 years, it is somewhat surprising that the ideas of sporting in this particular should so nearly assimilate, and that many of our modern gentry (in *blissful* ignorance no doubt) still retain

such antique and barbarous notions. I shall make no apology for going a little out of our regular line, and for once at least, taking advantage of what does not always allow of so strict an application. Our historian does not confine himself to one description of sportsmen, but like a true and faithful narrator makes honorable mention of what perhaps might not inaptly be termed the ESQUIRE and YEOMAN of the day. The most opulent of the former, he says, used to procure a number of the best hare-finders, who going out early in a morning to those places where it was most likely to find hares sitting, returned soon after with the report of their success. On receiving this information their employers immediately mounted their horses, and took out their greyhounds for the purpose of coursing. So far, however, were they from *mobbing* or taking any unfair advantage of an hare, that no more than two dogs were ever allowed to be run at once, and even then, only let loose at a considerable distance, lest the animal should be so terrified by their nearness, and the hallooing of the croud, as in the confusion to be killed without shewing any diversion, which circumstance frequently happened even to

the most game and sporting hares. The kind of country which was selected for this purpose was open and exposed, and where there was the least cover; hares found here were generally supposed to run better, and shew more sport than those of an enclosed country; for the opinion of those days was, that if an hare found she had any advantage over the greyhounds in swiftness, she moderated her speed accordingly, but if over-matched, she then tried to gain ground by frequent turns, throwing the dogs out beyond her, and at the same time endeavouring to make the nearest cover. If an hare was thus fortunate in saving herself, no unsportsmanlike means were used to force her from shelter; for even in ARRIAN'S time the ideas of sporting were too correct to refuse so humble an individual the reward of merit, and if ever a course was so long and disputed as to exhaust the powers of both dogs and hare, the latter was invariably taken up alive by the proper attendant, and afterwards turned down for future diversion.

Conscious of the effect of kind and conciliating language, each master encouraged his dog in the field for the excellence of his running, but at the

same time with a degree of caution not to persevere in this longer than the first course, lest after the fatigue of two or three courses, he might by such repeated encouragement exert his powers beyond their capacity, and thereby hurt his inside, which was thought to be the destruction of many good dogs. As hare-finders were only confined to the more opulent classes, it was the custom of those who could not support such indulgence to go out in a company on horseback, when they beat the most likely grounds, and on starting an hare the greyhounds were let loose after her; whilst others who were equally keen of the sport used to go on foot, and if any one accompanied them on horseback, it was his business to follow the dogs in the course. The method of beating for an hare was similar to what is done in these days. The company were drawn up in a straight rank either horse or footmen, and proceeded at certain distances from each other in a direct line to a given point, when wheeling round, that they might not exactly go over the same tract, they beat the ground regularly back. A person, as umpire or tryer, I imagine, was appointed to take command of the sport; if there were many dogs out, he gave

orders that such and such should be slipped according as the hare took to the right or left, and these orders were strictly obeyed. So careful were those people from committing any excess on such occasions, that no *young* hare was ever allowed to be started from her form; for, on the contrary, when a species of dog they sometimes used called finders, chanced to disturb one of these, the greyhounds were never suffered to be slipt at her: indeed the whole system bears about it the marks of genuine honesty, and affords a good lesson to those *thistle-whippers* of the present day, who both in theory and practice are too apt to consider that the beauty of a course solely consists in its *successful* termination.

LETTER II.

November.

I CANNOT agree with you, my dear G——, in thinking that the breed of greyhounds has made that manifest or rapid improvement which you are inclined to support; for without you can strengthen your argument by a similar assertion in favor of the hare, I do not exactly see how you are to draw any decisive conclusion. In our days we have had a SNOWBALL and a SNOWDROP*, an ECLIPSE and an EAGLE, but the race of animals like that of men have their PHILIPS and their ALEXANDERS, and it is not to every one we can

* Two renowned Yorkshire greyhounds, father and son; the former was never beat; and the latter won the Malton cup, against the best dogs of the country, in three successive seasons.

say, "Tu Marcellus eris." The societies which are formed in various parts of the kingdom for the diversion of coursing, are probably greater inducements towards improving the breed of this animal than any other; for without your dog has an appearance of blood, he there ranks no higher than a cur, even though his qualifications may be somewhat superior, and blood, beauty, bottom, and speed must all concentrate to carry the day. An anxiety for superiority forsakes us not in trifling matters, and whatever tends to the increase of individual renown, gives an additional spur to our exertions. Happily, through the medium of some friendly assistant, the honors we gain in the field are seldom suffered to die upon the spot, but are speedily announced in a bulletin of the day with all the pomp of hard-earned victory. It is this I am firmly persuaded, which induces many men to assume a character they do not possess, and to claim so close a connection with the more worthy descendants of the mighty ORION. Every county has a quality peculiar to itself, and on which it founds a claim to precedence; but amongst those which pretend to sporting celebrity, YORKSHIRE occupies the foremost rank. Its climate and si-

tuation; its wonderful extent and numerous population, added to the independent spirit of its inhabitants, and their natural propensity to pleasure, all combine to raise it far above its competitors, and to deride the challenge which their vanity may assume. It must not however be denied, but that Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Derbyshire are each famous for their greyhounds, and the best crosses have occasionally been had from thence; but when I give the character to Yorkshire I have done, I wish it to be understood as combining in itself more *general* resources for a sportsman than any other county, for, except black-game, every object of his pursuit is there to be found, not in plenty only, but perfection. The superiority of the greyhound of one county over that of another, and frequently an adjoining one, has at all times given rise to much controversy and speculation; but, in my opinion, so much depends upon the animal which is to determine this point, and the different methods of training and exercise, that we are too prone to regulate by theory, what can only be substantiated by long and skilful practice. We are so well aware of the different effects of air, food, and water upon

the constitution of the horse, that I am somewhat astonished we so rarely anticipate a similar result in that of the dog: sudden changes of either will overturn the best of systems previously adopted, which can only be again restored by an equal and uninterrupted process. The advantage, therefore, which a dog possesses of running upon his own ground; or, in other words, fighting upon his own dunghill, is so physically obvious as to require no further proof than daily experience; one trial will be sufficient to convince the most cynical declaimer; and though there are those who constantly arraign the practice, it nevertheless seldom conduces either to their profit or reputation. Notwithstanding, however, the difference of opinion upon these points, it has seldom happened that any existed in regard to the shape of the greyhound, and the old and favourite expression of

Headed like the SNAKE,
And *neck'd* like the DRAKE,
Sided like the BREAM,
Backed like a BEAM,
Tailed like the RAT,
And *footed* like the CAT,

has been generally considered decisive of excellence. Favourable as such an opinion appears to

be, and supported by the authority of time and experience, you will perhaps think it a bold attempt in me to refuse my unqualified approbation of what to most men appears so glaringly self-evident. It is generally allowed, I believe, that the speed of all animals depends much more upon the elegant formation of their various parts, than any innate quality, and so long as these proportions are uniform, and the muscular powers full and expanded, the greater will be the velocity of their motion when roused into action. Under these circumstances it is requisite that some one part should be so formed as to increase by its elasticity the action of the others: for this purpose the horse is gifted with a pastern, which according to its length and size adds very materially to his speed and stoutness. Now, it must be obvious, that as the hare can strike nearly as far at a stroke as the greyhound, it is in a great measure owing to the length of her toes, which supply the place of a pastern: and if this hold good in respect to one animal, it surely must towards all, so that a round foot from being really an advantage, in a greyhound, is decidedly the reverse. In a pointer, I acknowledge this to be a great perfection, but he is perhaps the only dog which in this particular

we should be so anxious about: indeed, many men carry the idea to an extravagant height, and the remark of an eminent artist, when I once made an observation upon the shape of a greyhound he was painting, "that, if he had followed the directions of his owner, he would have had no feet at all," struck me as conveying a tolerably correct idea of this generally received, but erroneous maxim*. The description before-named, is in other respects properly correct, and by attending to its directions, so far as appearances go at least, we shall not very seriously commit ourselves. In regard to the breeding of greyhounds†, there may perhaps, be two opinions, the one contending for

* Another and equally strong proof in favour of this argument, may be adduced from the circumstance of the preference which is given by the EUCHIDEANS of the day to those men who have a more than ordinary length of foot.

† In the year 1799, I had a favourite greyhound which at a particular period was sent to a renowned dog at no great distance from her quarters, and both for some weeks previous and subsequent to this intercourse, and also during its continuance, the greatest attention was had that no other dog should possibly interrupt it. The litter, consisting of seven, were all kept, five I gave away, and two I reserved for myself, but every one of them, except a bitch-puppy of my own, and which was the image of the sire, and a most elegant as well as good greyhound, turned out complete curs. The intelligence I received from the keeper, who had the care of her, was as follows; that when he took her from home her reluctance to accompany him was so great that he was

blood, the other for *shape*; but whatever difference there may be in the approximation of the terms, they nearly associate under that of a *running sort*. Now, we are more frequently led into error by depending upon the blood *only* of the horse, than we are by a similar expectation in that of the dog: the reasoning, therefore, must either be fallacious in theory, or imperfect in practice. We well

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obliged to lead her, and this with difficulty, and that, when on the road, she frequently turned round as in expectation of meeting some particular object: this he at length found to be a cur dog, which she had been bred up with, and at the sight of which her expressions of joy were of the most lavish description: this strange anxiety continued for the remainder of the journey, and when he left her with her new mate, her attitude was, if possible, more desponding than ever. The first care of the keeper upon his return was to confine the cur, which he did for a month, and at the end of that period to fetch home the bitch, which he found grown so excessively thin, though the best food had been constantly offered her, that he had some doubts of being able to restore her to health: the sight of her favourite, however, produced an almost immediate good effect, and a very few days restored her usual appearance: the term of her parturition was exactly sixty-three days from the fifth of her connection with the greyhound, and from every thing I was able to collect, no other dog whatever could have possibly been admitted to her either previously or subsequently; nevertheless the produce turned out as I have described.

I had intended to have made an experiment, which in all probability would have afforded more satisfactory evidence of this extraordinary circumstance than what I have related; but, in the mean time the bitch died, and my intentions were necessarily frustrated.

know that amongst horses the performances of two full brothers are seldom equal, but one is much superior to the other; this cannot happen from any difference in blood, and yet there are many sportsmen prejudiced enough to persevere, under the impression that the failing is but temporary, without making the smallest allowance for the deficiency of shape. Now whether this may arise from some defect of constitution in the sire or the dam is not very material for us to know; but I am of opinion that the same thing rarely happens to any great degree amongst dogs. It has been observed by a writer of some eminence, "that the skilful huntsman differs from the sportsman in one respect, for the first very often gives away or knocks his hound at head, without trying him at all, if he does not approve his figure; whereas the sportsman always trains, if he likes the blood, let the horse be ever so defective in the formation of parts, &c." In this knowledge of "the formation of parts" consists, according to my idea, the whole mystery of sporting science, and one obvious reason why we can form a more ready opinion of those of a dog than a horse is, that the human eye can better take in at one view the

parts and proportions of a being so much smaller than those of the other. This in addition to the less severe and more rational treatment they undergo when young, accounts for that partial declination of celebrity in greyhounds of the same litter, or, indeed, of the same breed. SNOWBALL as a sire, was more successful than any greyhound within my knowledge, and the blood still continues in high and deserved estimation; his has thoroughly superseded that motley breed we used formerly to see so prevalent on the Wolds; and Yorkshire, at this moment, may challenge the world. As a winner no dog ever yet came off with so much eclat, and though it might probably be in some measure owing to the very indifferent qualifications of his adversaries at the time, it must nevertheless be universally allowed that his style of winning was far beyond that of any modern dog, and perhaps the best proof of his worth consists in the unrivalled excellence of his progeny. It required, indeed, no inconsiderable share of perseverance to bring about a revolution in a race of animals, which in those days was so cruelly neglected, and so little understood; but

luckily the reformist was a man whose knowledge of the world decided the legality of his acts, and who by a flattering and unwearied attention to this particular department of sporting, finally overcame the Herculean task.

LETTER III.

An establishment of greyhounds is amongst those luxurious appendages of this life, which cannot be supported without more than vulgar means, and however some persons may flatter themselves with having attained this object of their wishes, it requires but a small degree of penetration to be able to discover the fallacy of their pretensions. Title and fortune may give the thing a certain character of consequence, but science alone can make it respectable; and though the former may be only partially diffused, and the latter not very generally obtained, we have *one* instance at least which sufficiently proves the pre-eminence of the combination. To arrive at that knowledge and information which will enable you to contend with others of more qualified experience, and best support

your future fame, is an arduous and bold undertaking, for unlike shooting or hunting we must not in this instance rely so much upon physical as mental assistance, which fully accounts for this species of diversion usually becoming the last resource of the tottering sportsman. It is somewhat pleasing to consider, that when the infirmities of age are creeping upon us, and the adventurous flights of manhood are settling into a calm and temperate seclusion, we have still the opportunity of gratifying that latent spark of native fondness, which though burning with a less ardent passion, imparts a warmth of convivial delight, and restores the recollection of past enjoyments. How often have we listened with boyish eagerness to the well known tale of more prattling experience! How often in fancy gathered laurels of our own, and sighed for the completion of that period which would realize our fondest hopes! Little did we then suppose that the connection we were so anxious to establish had already passed the zenith of its power, and that the tedious moments of scholastic restraint were but the prelude to anxiety and doubt! I well remember when during the few hours of intreated indulgence, we used to take the

field with greater glee, and more honourable intentions than the most renowned characters of antiquity, and when he whose fortunate stars guided him to the object of his wishes, gained more unqualified applause than the triumphant heroes of Marathon or Pharsalia. Happy, happy days! when hand in hand with health and exercise, and uninfluenced by any passion but what the next moment might reasonably gratify, pleasure and application "in sweet succession," gave a zest to life which subsequent experience vainly regrets cannot be renewed.

I think, my dear G——, you have told me that the people of your part of the country have no idea of keeping their greyhounds together, or under any degree of restraint, so that from running loose and unnoticed they soon contract an habit of straying out alone, equally to the prejudice of your hares, and the violation of discipline; for however in nature he may be less inclined to ramble than the hound or pointer, still we all know that the greyhound may be tempted to do it, and instances are not wanting, I believe, to prove where, through such mistaken indulgence, the animal has entirely

forsaken his domestic habits, and assumed others of wanton ferocity. The temper of this dog is originally mild and inoffensive, but it will be found to vary considerably according to the mode and period of confinement; even so much so, that I have seen him after being chained for no long space of time to a common wooden kennel, become as savage as the most zealous house dog, and far more dangerous, for he would rush upon a person with the same quick and sudden attack that an hawk seizes its prey: he is almost for ever on the watch, and appears to have less occasion for sleep than any other of his species, and his sense of hearing may be rated in a similar degree with his powers of sight and action. The Count de Buffon mentions the swan as the finest model in nature towards improving the art of navigation; in like manner the greyhound perhaps presents as fine a form for excelling upon another element, for in no animal is the capacity and power of speed so inimitably displayed. In the first place, the position and form of his head when running against the wind, are admirably adapted for cutting and throwing it off his body, which is the contrary with most other animals, as they oppose not only an extended, but

generally a more erect front: his width and depth of chest allow him a freedom of respiration which nothing but the most severe exertion can possibly exhaust, and the strength of his loins piloted, if I may so express myself, by the tapered shape and elastic spring of his stern, enable him to make those quick and sudden turnings which is the greatest beauty in a close running dog. His round feet, as I before mentioned, are not in my opinion so well calculated for speed as is generally imagined, but when the form of them is such, the objection perhaps is more than cancelled by the firm and even position of the legs, the length of which from the elbow to the knee before, and to the letting down of the hock behind, added to the full and muscular expansion of the thigh, form altogether so correct an elegance of parts as enables him to move with an ease and freedom peculiarly his own. Your establishment of greyhounds is only small, and therefore the plan of kennelling I shall recommend may be easily pursued, which would not exactly correspond with one more extensive. Provided I kept no more than three or four brace of greyhounds, they should always lie in a stable purposely set apart for them and a couple of hacks,

and made large enough to contain a separate kennel for each, of the following construction: the form should be a square of at least four feet, and two in depth, and altogether similar to a large potter's pannier, placed with the open end upwards of course, and fixed steady to the ground by means of a piece of wood at each corner, but not so very securely that you cannot at pleasure remove it as necessity may suggest: hay is decidedly the best litter, whether you consider the comfort or health of the animal; but it must be good, such, in fact, as you give to your horses, for the refuse of a stable is often damp and mouldy, and would if thus made use of be productive of endless disorder and disappointment. I would not have these beds close to each other, but the space between ought to be large enough to admit a broom; and their being thus separated will give each dog a more distinct idea of his own property, which, when he has once ascertained, it will be difficult hereafter to induce him to relinquish; for a day it may be necessary perhaps to confine him by a chain, but seldom beyond that, or two nights at the utmost. If you make any objection to this plan, and say, that on days when your greyhounds are not

wanted they will be liable to interruption by those who want your hacks, I answer that these hacks, as I call them, are entirely appropriated to coursing, and therefore can never be required, whether for exercise or work, without the attendance of their companions; this constant habit of companionship creates a kind of familiarity which in coursing is frequently attended with beneficial effects. There are, I dare say, many reasons for expelling dogs from a stable, and indeed, amongst hunters it is what I never would upon any occasion allow; they are when thus confined generally filthy animals, and the sight of one sometimes will damp the most ardent appetite; but the greyhound is certainly a strong exception, for he is neither so coarse in his feeding, nor so voracious of appetite; neither is he so spitefully malicious, nor so rude in his caresses; but altogether exhibits a delicacy of character, and a chasteness of disposition which is not found so decidedly to concentrate in any other of his race. In the management, however, of this kind of kennelling, particular attention must be paid to comfort and cleanliness, and during the time that your dogs are either at work or exercise, the frames should be taken out into the air, the lit-

ter removed from them, and afterwards well shaken and supplied with fresh hay if necessary, for a dog before he lies down will always be observed to reconnoitre his resting place, smelling cautiously all around it, and expressing the utmost anxiety and uneasiness if it should not be perfectly agreeable to his taste and fancy. Nothing can reconcile this apparent fastidiousness so effectually as cleanliness, for however strange it may appear, I have seen a dog though absolutely starving with hunger prefer a good bed to the most dainty food, which he no longer refused but greedily devoured the moment it was offered to him in this situation of quietness and rest: it should therefore be an invariable rule to have the food for every description of sporting dog ready to offer him the moment he comes in from work, and not to suffer his appetite to be in any degree paralyzed by the intermediate indulgence of a comfortable kennel, which only he should be allowed to take a final possession of when you have done all that may lie within your abilities towards the restoration of his exhausted powers. I began this letter with a few remarks upon an establishment of greyhounds, but as it may probably amuse you to see how far the whole

paraphernalia of sporting apparatus is to be carried, I have inclosed a curious account of a travelling group which a short time ago made its appearance in the public prints of the day

Colonel Thornton's Departure from York to Spy Park, in Wiltshire: in a Letter from William, at Wetherby, in Yorkshire, to his Friend Peter in London.

DEAR COZ.—Though my letters you kindly peruse,
And tho' frequent I write, still keep asking for news;
What news so afflictive, so dire can I tell,
As that which our county so lately befel?
O dismal the story, and sad to remark,
That Yorkshire has lost what is gain'd by Spy Park.
Colonel Thornton is gone! a more elegant youth,
More justly renown'd for fair dealing and truth,
With candour and courage superior to both,
And so very exact that his word was an oath.
Colonel Thornton is gone! and our grief is past shewing,
And all I can add is—the mode of his going;
Which form'd as he left us, a grand cavalcade,
A kind of a mountebank harliquinade.
But that the procession we duly may quote,
What first struck the eye was the *wonderful boat*.
That boat by a magical kind of direction,
Which turn'd the whole tide of the Yorkshire election.

Now appeared like gilt gingerbread, seen at our fairs,
Drawn in trappings of gold by four cream-colour'd mares;
And a breed more imperial no sportsman e'er hit on,
For he says they were got by the *King of Great Britain!*
At the top all the game was display'd as a show,
Which at times had been killed by the Colonel's *long bow*,
While across the boat-waggon, by way of a hint,
Lay the whip of that hard-hearted horse whipping *Flint*,
Which seemed in low voice, to address the beholders—
"My sweet Colonel I'm here, so take care of your shoulders."
The *hounds* follow'd next, of each size and dimension,
Which in fact could be raised or supposed by invention;
Lapdog-beagles, *white terriers*; and dress'd in gold stuff,
Two greyhounds came next—*Braggadocio* and *Puff*,
With lists round their necks of the prizes, they won,
Obtain'd in great matches they never had run.
On a grey, the *head huntsman* his figure display'd,
Riding airy and light with his wages unpaid;
While close at his heels, like a minikin pin,
On a small pocket poney—a bag whipper-in.
Then follow'd nine waggons, with treasure divine,
Design'd for immortals—superlative wine!
But the merits of each in two words may be told,
The waggons and wine were an hundred years old!
Then, neatly arranged in due order each cork,
Which at *Thorn'ville* was drawn by his *Highness* of *York*.
Who swore from such bottles he never would wince,
For the wine and the Colonel were treats for a Prince.

The *falconer* came last, with his hawks in array,
Like their master prepared to make all things their prey,
For things that we know we can easily teach,
And a pigeon, they say, is convenient to each.
In short, my dear Cousin, no words can describe
The exit he made for himself and his tribe;
But he's gone! this most excellent youth is departed,
And his friends and the ladies now are all broken hearted.
One sentiment stronger on each seems impress'd,
As he rose in the east may he set in the west.

The Disastrous Arrival at Spy Park; in a Second Letter from William, at Wetherby, in Yorkshire, to his Friend Peter in London.

Dear Coz.—On this letter you could not have reckon'd,
But the Colonel compels me to write you a second;
For when Pidcock is willing the country to range,
And quit the pure regions of Exeter Change,
With galantie shows he arranges his clan,
And stuffs, with strange monsters, each vast caravan:
Resolv'd as he passes, "to take in the flats,"
With elephants, tygers, apes, monkeys and rats.
So the Colonel, conceiving the matter no sin,
To play at this pastime of taking folks in,
Resolves to throw dust in the countrymen's eyes,
With masquerade dogs and with ducks in disguise;

Till *Pidcock* and *Thornton*, 'the villages squall,
And the wise ones sing "tantarara fools all!"
But as in all cases, precedence is given
(Tho' hard be the task where the merits are even)
For the present to Thornton must Pidcock give way,
As the one shows for nothing—the other takes pay.
On the road then the Colonel preceded his corps
In the guise and the shape of an horrible boar;
While his fierceness to soothe, and to soften his pain,
Two loving wild *sows* were attending his train;
Designing to litter some night in the dark,
And grace with their offspring the groves of *Spy Park*.
Then came some small beasts, tho' enormous their merits,
Ichpneumons, opossums, black cats, and red ferrets,
With strange ducks and drakes that were quacking their joys,
Muscovy, some call'd them, and others—decoys.
For they say that the Colonel could always succeed
In rearing this gainful and beautiful breed.
The procession was closed by the huntsman half crazy,
With *Theodilite* lame, and the tired *Esterhazy*;
Two horses of such supereminent cast
That a stoic might weep at their failing at last.
When the sportsmen of Chippenham beheld the renown
Which the *beasts* and the *Colonel* conferr'd on their town,
They sagely imagined that something to eat,
To the beasts or their master might still be a treat;
Declaring it would be most curious indeed,
"If they could but see *him* and the *animals* feed."

But 'tis not in mortals success to command,
The sky over-cast, shewed a storm was at hand;
The rain fell in torrents! and words are but faint,
The beasts and the Colonel's disasters to paint;
Such kicking and fighting, and biting and squalling—
Birds chattering, dogs howling, and cats catter-wawling;
The beagles sweet dogs, to their chins in the water,
The huntsman half mad, and half-drown'd swimming after;
The two loving sows in the hurricane screaming,
The boar foaming with rage, and the Colonel blaspheming.
In short, as if reckless of honour and truth,
Which all countries might learn from this excellent youth.
As if not regarding the calm and repose
Which follow his footsteps wherever he goes,
It would seem as if *fate* had resolv'd to defeat,
For purposes wise, this his *latest retreat.*
O dire, in the floods had he perish'd—but soft,
There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
Which spitefully whispers, in silvery sound—
What *my* Colonel to bring him—he shall not be drown'd.
Then happy Spy Park! whose white mansion possesses
The treasure we love, and whose loss so distresses.
But my tears blot the paper; you'll say that I silly am,
So no more *friend* Peter from Wetherby,

WILLIAM.

LETTER IV.

The tryer of a course has the most arduous as well as the most unthankful office to fill of any within this department, for he must both do justice, and give satisfaction to all parties, and in a field of fifty sportsmen where each prides himself upon his individual discernment, this you will say is no easy matter to accomplish: moreover, he must have an eye to see, and an head to retain; a judgment to discriminate, and a confidence to declare; and, unawed by the silly babble of the multitude, follow the disinterested impulse of his own unbiassed skill: he should also be a bold and good horseman, and of that rank in society as to be above the temptation of a base or mercenary action: in a word, he should come recommended

by his experience, respected for his worth, and pleased with his employment. His station in the field should be constantly in advance, forming a line of demarcation betwixt the company and the SLIPPER*, so that when an hare is started nothing may impede his view of both her and the dogs; and in order still more effectually to assist his observations, the crowd should never intrude themselves within the forbidden space, nor by hallooing first, "now black, now blue," "now blue and now black," bewilder his divided attention; in fact, it would be politic if upon these occasions the judge was to exclude this *auricular* intelligence, and abide solely by the evidence of visual testimony; unless, indeed, like the philosopher of Molière he could destine one ear, "pour les langues scientifiques et étrangères; et l'autre pour

* THE SLIPPER, or, in other words, the person to whose care the dogs in couples are committed, is a person of no mean consequence, and ought to possess considerable powers, for he should never be allowed to ride. The man who fills this office at Malton is a perfect prodigy, and the ingenious member of that society has contrived to adorn him with a badge of honourable distinction; viz. by having a piece of blue cloth inserted in the back of his scarlet jacket, and cut into the shape of a *lady's slipper*.

la vulgaire et la maternelle." The system of inclosing open fields and commons, which increases annually, makes it more than ever necessary to have a TRYER well mounted, which, without a very considerable salary, it is impossible he can do individually; the members, therefore, of every coursing society would do well to consider this, and take upon themselves alternately to prevent the possibility of any disappointment occurring, as it frequently happens that a course must of necessity remain undetermined when the horse of the judge either *balks* a fence, or, in attempting to clear it pulls away a whole rood of railing after him: not but there are some men who, let the event be ever so properly decided, still remain discontented, and think they see with so much better eyes themselves, that no fair reasoning can prove to them the absurdity of their pretensions. It is however a happy circumstance that there are those faithless beings; it no doubt promotes an amusement which might otherwise perhaps sometimes stand still, and though these unfortunates are generally obliged to seek for consolation amidst the lamentations of disappointment, they constantly attack you with renovated vigour, nor dread, as Ovid terms it, to im-

plore the assistance of a deity whose sanctity they had previously violated. It is indeed amusing to witness what little decorum they observe in transactions of this nature, and how trifling a circumstance will throw a gloom over that countenance which the moment preceding shone in *meridian* splendor! Poor simple souls! they forget that "fugaces labuntur anni," and copying the example of the vain and antiquated damsel, think to hide the wrinkles of age beneath the blandishments of art! I have known instances notwithstanding, where the decision of a TRYER has been very far from correct, and one of which I shall relate: the match took place at a MALTON meeting, betwixt a black dog belonging to Major Topham, called Blacksmith, a son of Snowball, and a dog I borrowed from a person of York: it was for a considerable sum, and excited rather more than a common interest, but owing to the meeting having been put off on account of the weather, I could not be present, and therefore commissioned a gentleman to act for me. The dogs were both in high condition, mine particularly, which, after being slipped, passed his adversary, turned the hare, then fell, passed him again and killed the hare be-

fore him, so that Blacksmith never served him once: every one of course thought it a hollow thing; when the judge, with all the *conscientious* forbearance which so *peculiarly* distinguishes gentlemen of *his profession*, thought proper to give it undecided, the match being for so large a sum, and the course so short! a circumstance which the worthy Major was cautious enough to take advantage of, and consequently withdrew his dog. I never knew this equalled but once, when the judge of a race took half an hour to consider and consult his friends whether or not the heat was a dead one! Now though the decision of the above match was, you will say, manifestly wrong, still I do not blame the Major for withdrawing his dog without venturing upon another course, for in all probability he would have been left further behind than ever, as in coming to his ground the Major's servant, who formerly, I believe, held some high office under the famous KATTERFELTO, *amused* him with a course so long and so severe as would have rendered any ordinary dog unfit to start for a day at least: but these events ought to have no weight with a judge; it is taking an unfair advantage of an unforeseen accident, and it is intended that he should only de-

cide upon what he absolutely sees, and not on matters of an erroneous supposition. Indeed, I think it better where a match takes place for any considerable sum of money, to have it judged by a gentleman, for whatever we may hereafter think of his decision, we must at any rate refrain from giving utterance to our thoughts, and though the judgment of the common Tryer might have been equally correct, in the one case we necessarily avoid a discussion, which, under the supposed dependant circumstances of the other, we perhaps feel ourselves authorized in prolonging. It is, however, a hard matter to persuade any man of the falsity of his opinions, especially if he pride himself upon the quality of his experience, and all the beating in the world will never drive him to the adoption of a more wise and profitable system; so that I question whether a punishment similar to what was inflicted by CALIGULA upon one part of his unfortunate subjects, would at all diminish this fatal propensity.

It was customary some years ago, when a number of dogs were to contend for the same prize, to run the whole together, and if any two or more of

them were so alike as not to be perfectly distinguishable in a crowd, to tie different coloured pieces of ribband round the neck of each, so that the Tryer might be better able to judge of their several performances; this plan has been very wisely abandoned, and substituted by another much less liable to create confusion; the name of each dog is now written upon a separate piece of paper, and the whole are thrown into a hat or any similar situation where they can be drawn out by two at a time; according to the number of dogs these form a main of so many matches, and the winning dog of each attacks the next in succession, until the contest is reduced to a single trial. This is certainly the only plan which can be pursued with any degree of accuracy to determine the superiority of so many dogs; still there are various reasons which combine to render it imperfect: in the first place, a course may prove long or short according to the good or bad qualities of an hare, and the ground at one moment may be open for miles, which presently after shall be occasionally intercepted with cover, so that the winning dog of a very long and unsuccessful course will stand a poor chance of ri-

valling him whose endeavours may have been not only less severely, but more fortunately exerted: this might indeed be prevented, or at least in some measure remedied, by never suffering two dogs to be slipped at an hare but which was found in her form, and in a country as little liable to interruption from cover as could be conveniently selected, and if any doubt still prevailed, an hare in this case might be allowed as much *law* as is consistent with propriety. Formerly the speed of greyhounds was tried by running them at deer, which were provoked to take a certain line by a species of slow lurcher; at a particular spot was fixed the goal or winning post, and the first dog which passed this obtained the prize: but the method was so tame and so decidedly hostile to all ideas of correct sporting, that it has long been consigned to that oblivion so justly its due, and at present scarcely lives within the remembrance of a single individual. There is a sad absurdity in thus seducing any animal from his proper sphere of action, and I do not see how it is to be reconciled either on the score of singularity or amusement: we all know

what an animal is capable of being taught; but, I think, that unless absolute necessity compels the experiment, it were much better to avoid such an extravagant display of unnatural propensities.

LETTER V.

The training, or, in other words, the getting of greyhounds into running condition, resembles in a great measure the preparation of most animals for similar purposes, all efforts combining towards the same end; viz. speed, wind, and stoutness. There may be various opinions concerning the best method of accomplishing these purposes; yet I fancy there exists but one as to the necessity. The interest which is excited by turf competition continues to increase, and the stake which many are induced to hazard upon such events receives no diminution from the pressure of either times or circumstances, so that, amongst a certain class, the events of the Derby and St. Leger are more frequently discussed and more anxiously anticipated than the present downfal of the Napoleon dynasty.

In an age where science has made such rapid improvement, and where its principles have been so generally diffused, it would have appeared extraordinary if they had not manifested themselves equally in matters of high and minor importance; and, I believe, at this moment the knowledge of training has acquired a character far beyond that of any former period. To assist us, however, in this pursuit, something more is necessary than the mere experience of stable exercise, and a proper understanding of constitutional powers can alone perfect the attainment. It must be obvious to all, but more particularly to him whose habits are that way disposed, how nice a matter it is to form a correct judgment of the full and effective power of those animals, whose physical capabilities we are inclined to prove, and what a long acquaintance we must have with various seeming inconsistences to enable us to draw any tolerable degree of accuracy and conviction: the smallest deviation from accustomed regularity will frequently overthrow the most scientific system, and those events which to an inexperienced person appear the most trifling, are sometimes of a magnitude to blast the fairest promise of fancied triumph. I mention

this particularly to shew what little dependence should be placed upon the expected performances of any animal without his previous preparation be thoroughly established, and even how liable he is in every stage to suffer a relapse from the slightest degree of either real or seeming neglect. From a certain knowledge of his ground, and the distance he is to run, an horse can be most assuredly brought fitter to the post than a dog, and his exercise also may be more or less severely proportioned: now the work of a greyhound for instance, or an hound, cannot be forced upon him to a degree we should probably wish, and the only expedient which is left to us is to endeavour to effect this in a great measure by constant stratagem; as if you were to course your dog too frequently or too severely, (and from the uncertain length of courses this might unavoidably happen) he might chance both to lame and overwork himself: all therefore we have to do is to give him that kind of exercise and food which shall enable him to go stoutly through a long course, and with a degree of superior speed in a short one; and this, my dear G——, I shall endeavour to describe to you in a manner which I flatter myself upon trial you will approve; it was com-

municated to me by a friend whose uniform success, and long experience gives him the best claim upon our attention. I confess, however, I do not like running greyhounds too young; with horses we may do it, as their work can at all times be proportioned to their age and strength; but the former exerts himself from the natural impulse of a violent appetite, and which cannot be allayed without the object which provokes it is either overtaken or removed. On this principle then, I certainly object to bringing out a greyhound, especially in public, before he is eighteen months old; and, as I look upon a dog to be in his prime betwixt the ages of two years and an half and five, every encouragement should be given him to perfect his maturity before he contends for the honour of his breed *. It may be said, perhaps, that running whelps together is not so likely to injure either, as classing them with more experienced dogs, where a laudable effort of emulation might even-

* I have been told that the most proper time to enter greyhounds is as follows; a bitch at twelve, and a dog at eighteen months old, and that both are at their best at the expiration of six months from their *respective* periods of entrance.

tually prove injurious; but it is an experiment which in neither case do I recommend, and my reason for disapproving it is the many evil consequences I have so frequently witnessed from its adoption.

Before ever you proceed to enter upon your training system, be very certain that your dog is in good health, and let him be rather high than low in flesh, and take him up fourteen days before the time of running; provided he is in both respects as above stated, this will be sufficient for the period of his training, but if he is not so, it must be extended according to the urgency of the case. Commence your operations with two doses of physic, allowing a couple of days to intervene betwixt the administering of each dose; and this physic should be given over night, as its effects will be more beneficially promoted, and the ease of your dog considerably assisted. On the morning of the fourth day he must be taken out early, and allowed to run about and stretch himself (only upon turf) for half an hour, then brought home and fed; in the evening again taken out, and his exercise be something stronger for the same space of time, and afterwards

brought home and fed: on the following day the same rules must be observed with this difference, that his exercise (in the morning particularly) must be more severe, and he must now also be taken out from eleven till one in the middle of the day, in addition to what I have already named, but only for the benefit of air and water. On the sixth day, if all things proceed as you wish, you may venture upon a course, and also on every third day until he runs, on which days I think it advisable that he should not be out longer than three hours, and if possible to avoid looking for an hare to any tedious length. The plan of exercise morning and evening which is generally pursued is as follows; let a person hold your dog until yourself on horseback get to a considerable distance from him, and then halloo him forward for about a mile at his best speed, coaxing him at the end, and making every possible demonstration of real pleasure; this work may be increased or diminished according as you see a necessity for either, but the dog that can take it regularly and strong is the most likely to prove well on the day. The next thing to be considered is the food, and its effects as to reality and appearance. In times of scarcity

it may be thought somewhat out of character to recommend articles of consumption by many not to be procured, and by others even considered as occasional luxuries: you have desired me, however, to write what I know, and I trust a compliance with your wishes will screen me from any idea of unnecessary indulgence. The meat you are to give must be good beef or mutton boiled, but not to excess, and as the liquor or broth should on no account form any part of it, you will be careful to prevent the waste of that which is most nutritious*: this must be assisted by eggs, lightly poached, given occasionally in the morning, and bread made according to the following recipe: take of the best flour two-thirds, and of oatmeal one, and of the whites of eggs in the proportion of eighteen to a peck loaf, with a little yeast, working the whole well up with good ale: about equal quantities of each (bread and meat) must be given at the times I have stated, and after a course you

* In general the meat should be rather under-done, but varied as your dog is high or low in flesh, well done if the former, and in the opposite extreme when otherwise.

will find a sop in the pan an excellent relish. In the course of preparation you will most probably observe a frequency of constitutional changes in your dog, and which can only be assisted or removed by a close attendance at the hours of feeding and exercise, and allotting them as your judgment may direct. The great art of training appears to consist in bringing your dog to the post without any material reduction in flesh, and only taking especial care that what he has got on him may be perfectly corky and light; in fact every part about him should be as elastic as possible, and, quite contrary to that most erroneous of all opinions that he should be *as hard as a board*, he cannot feel too compressed and springy. It is not, however, in my power to direct you in these matters with any degree of certain success: experience can alone render you competent to decide, but I think I may with truth venture to affirm that these hints will not mislead you, and as they are in no sense contrary to reason, so will the result be favourable to your wishes. Cleanliness is moreover a grand consideration, and all the minutiæ of the brush and the wisp should be as rigidly attended to as with those animals that more apparently re-

quire them: I am not an advocate for cloathing; clean hay is the best litter, and, as it never harbours any description of vermin, will be found very preferable to straw. Above all, be regular in your attendance, morning and evening; and, should the weather, at your stated hours of exercise, be not exactly to your mind, take the first advantage of a favourable moment to reclaim that you shall have lost. I think no dog ought to undergo more than three preparations of this kind in one season, and as it will not do to have him always under a regular course of training, the intermediate space must be considered as one of pastime and relaxation. I have thus brought you to the post, and before we start for the prize, allow me for a moment to collect my instructions.

LETTER VI.

THERE have been as many disputes, my dear G——, concerning the stoutness of hares as there can possibly have arisen upon the same quality in greyhounds, and almost every county lays an equal claim to precedence in this respect. I have no doubt whatever but there are good hares all over the kingdom; still, to say that one part of it may not be superior to another, would be an assertion very difficult to maintain, especially when you hear one man speak in favour of those of an enclosed country, another of an open, and a third of hilly or mountainous land. There are three causes, perhaps, which more or less contribute to this perfection---climate, food, and exercise. In regard to the last, it is well known that hares, which are seldom disturbed, rarely travel any distance from home, and therefore can-

not be in wind equal to others of a more roving disposition, which is sufficiently attested by comparing the strength of a male hare in March, and many of the preceding months. You will ask me now, perhaps, if it is so very material upon what an hare feeds, provided the food she does procure be wholesome and nutritious? I answer, undoubtedly it is; for I look upon an hare in this respect to be somewhat similar to a sheep, and can there be two animals more totally different than the Tees-water and the South-down? They both get fat it is true, but the one sooner, and in an idle, luxurious manner, and the other by hard labour as it were, and continual thriving, so that it requires very little penetration to discover which of the two is in the best condition to undergo fatigue: in fact, what is it that makes the flesh of the mountain-sheep so much more *firm* and sweet than that of the lowland, but a variety of herbage, and a constant unsettled disposition in endeavouring to procure it? The hare of the downs then must be in better *running condition* than any other, for also knowing that there is no shelter for her within a certain distance, she will naturally keep herself, *in such case*, as to be able to reach that without feeling any serious want

of strength, if compelled to exert it. To be certain indeed, that this is the case, and that the hare of the downs travels over a greater space of country in the night time than any other, it is only necessary to observe, when hunting with harriers, how much longer her trail is, which frequently draws you three or four miles before you come to her form, whereas it generally happens that in inclosed countries you find your game within a few fields, in the first or second fence, or at any rate the nearest thicket; and however an hare may be tempted to leave her native hills, and visit her companions of the plains, she never remains there beyond a single day, and if, during that period, disturbed, invariably retraces her former route. Moreover, what conduces, in a great measure, to weaken and destroy the powers of hares, is their immoderate attachment to turnips, which, in a wet season, is as fatal to them as to sheep, and it is so common an observation for a countryman to make, when an hare has shewn a bad course, that she is rotten, that, under such circumstances, I am very positive, nine times out of ten, her lungs, on inspection, will be found to be either totally, or nearly, destroyed. All these causes then, I think, warrant the conclusion that

the hare of the downs is superior to every other.---The attachment which these animals shew to the spot where they were first brought forth, is never to be subdued, except by death, and very frequently after the longest courses and most severe runs, they may be found in the same form from whence started the day preceding. Almost every village can boast of an hare of this description, and if she is fortunate enough to escape for any length of time the vigilance of her enemies, her character becomes so notorious as to afford matter of the most strange speculation to the whole surrounding country; hounds and greyhounds, hitherto invincible, now find their best endeavours fruitless and unavailing; the most extended chase is but a prelude to defeat and disappointment, until "*the old witch*," a title now bestowed upon her, at length assumes every shape to complete the discomfiture of her astonished pursuers! At one time she takes shelter amidst her sisterhood in the *hen-roost*; at another suddenly changes her sex, and becomes the guardian of the fold, and in the end is transformed into the real picture of misery herself, and with all the "variety of wretchedness" is discovered sitting within her *spacious mansion!* This, believe me, is no sketch of

fancy, nor is the colouring heightened beyond the touch of reality, and however of late we may have emerged from that chaos of superstition which unhappily clouded our better faculties, so long as a mistaken fanaticism still impedes our view, will these occasional exhalations for a moment, perhaps, obtrude betwixt our immediate enjoyment and future expectation.

We must now consider how far climate promotes that quality in hares which I have already in part attributed to the effects of food and exercise. Whatever country an hare may inhabit, she will always be found to change her situation accordingly as the weather is open or severe, seasonable or cold, and upon every occasion to chuse that particular spot which is most favourable to the enjoyment of the one, or as affording a shelter from the other; thus in the winter she usually prefers a southern aspect, and in the summer a northern one; the wind, however, more generally determines this choice, and enables her at the same time with a very surprising accuracy to foretel any change in the atmosphere; by this means a good hare finder is seldom at a loss to determine upon his

line of range. We must not, however, suppose that this fickle disposition is stimulated solely by a regard to comfort; other causes no doubt equally prevail, amongst which that of health is certainly a principal: that good air is conducive to this, no one, I believe, will deny, and that such is more likely to be found in elevated and open situations than in those which are contracted and confined, will bear the same analogy. We are told that the mountain Arab is superior to every other horse in the substance and strength of his sinews, owing to the particular quality of the air of the desert, which is so free from vapours, that upon the brightest gun, after laying abroad the whole night, there will not appear the least shadow of rust. To be certain, however, of the effects of dry and humid air upon any substance exposed to it, suspend a string with a small weight affixed to the end, and observe its contracted and relaxed state at each different change, and, if we suppose the sinews of every animal to be composed of so many various threads or fibres, we may at once account for the effect of air and climate upon the powers of the whole.

This effect of climate may not only be observed to influence the stoutness and activity of hares, but

also their growth, and in some countries their color; generally speaking, the hare of the hills is a much less animal, another reason also why her powers of action are more free and capable of sustaining greater fatigue; as for a difference in color it is only material as affording a further proof of the constitutional change which is produced by different temperatures of heat and cold. I cannot confirm the foregoing remarks more effectually than by inviting you to try the difference which exists between the hares in your country and those in my neighbourhood; and to prepare you against any disappointment which the fruitless endeavors of your dogs might occasion, you must arm yourself with all the philosophic firmness of a probationary candidate, for a friend of mine gave away the last season what he considered a very moderate dog indeed, and he afterwards learnt that his superiority in an inclosed country was so decisive that he killed every hare in ten successive courses, single handed. Indeed the mongrel looking animals that you see in the possession of many individuals, who are well known to keep nothing for *shew alone*, will at once convince the complete sportsman of their very dubious, if not to say insignificant powers, when put in competition with a real game hare,

and it has never, within my experience or knowledge, happened, that one of these *family* greyhounds, *though ever so well educated*, was in any degree able to contend with the more generous attributes of perfect breeding: I believe this was once so well evinced to the CALEDONIAN gentry, that they have never since dared to cross the TWEED upon an expedition which, at the time, appeared to them to promise so triumphant a termination.

LETTER VII.

The circumstance you mentioned in your last letter, my dear G-------, is one which so invariably occurs, and which is such a manifest and open violation of all proper authority, that it can scarcely be called a casual event, and I am therefore frequently induced to think that more is intended than we probably imagine. It is undoubtedly a great inconvenience having to send your dogs any considerable distance to their ground, and the person to whose care they are entrusted cannot be too steady or too particular in obeying your orders; but as three dogs are quite sufficient to occupy one man's attention, any greater number must have their separate establishments. On no account should these men be suffered to ride; for, independent of the chance of your greyhounds being

trod upon, and the indifference about their travelling a proper pace, an hare might perhaps be carelessly rode over, or come across from some other quarter, and one on horseback cannot exert half the power to restrain a dog's eagerness which another would be able to use on foot, and no excuse for a dog's afterwards being beat, sounds so unsportsmanlike, or comes with so ungracious an assurance, as charging it to the carelessness of a servant. There is a certain distance which a dog should always travel before he reaches his ground, but beyond this I would not recommend, for a greyhound that has run a couple of seasons becomes so well acquainted with every requisite arrangement, that if his temper be in the least degree fretful or suspicious, any protracted delay in realizing his expectations will very materially weaken his powers, and although the symptoms may not be so conspicuous as those of a fretful horse when he goes any distance to cover, still the consequence is equally pernicious. I would, however, previous to taking my dogs into couples, allow them for a few minutes that kind of necessary indulgence which they invariably require when first released from confinement; they will travel

more cheerfully, and afford fewer occasions to an ill-tempered fellow to check that facilitating propensity, so natural to every animal: it should not also be a perfect matter of indifference as to the rate of travelling, nor indeed to the mode; the former must be regulated by the rule of condition, observing to keep up that degree of circulation which will best obviate the bad effects of both heat and cold, and the softest and cleanest path will most assuredly add as much to the comfort as it will preserve the good appearance of your dogs. In fact, *the style* of doing any thing is half the battle, and success will, nine times out of ten, incline to the side which preserves some degree of regularity, rather than to that which is marked by either a careless or extravagant indifference; there is a certain nicety which every man's establishment should exhibit, in order to insure both comfort and respect, and a single glance will at all times determine whether his means are profitably expended*.

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* The following circumstance, which, at the time, created no inconsiderable share of amusement, may not, perhaps, be inaptly introduced to shew the extravagant fancies which the *style* of a sporting set-out sometimes creates. Doctor B——, a particular

There appears to me to be too much negligence about the management or care of greyhounds, which have arrived on their ground, and that from this circumstance many matches are lost, which by other means might be prevented. We know that the powers of all animals are considerably weakened if they are allowed to contemplate an object which excites their passions, and that when we absolutely require the proof of these powers, disappointment frequently is the consequence.--- What a manifest advantage in every race does a cool-tempered and quiet horse possess over another which is fretful and unruly; and how much more likely are the effects of training and condition to prove successful, if, until the moment required for

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friend of mine, and the head of —— College, is a great sportsman, and famous for his greyhounds: he was met one morning by some indifferent person, who told it to the next, that he had seen the Doctor with his dogs; this was soon magnified into the Doctor with his greyhounds; a third had seen him out coursing—a fourth said he had seen him return—a fifth, that he had good sport—a sixth, that he had been fortunate—a seventh, that he had killed an hare—an eighth, that he brought her home—a ninth, that he had an hare behind him—a tenth, that he had his hare tied behind—till at length "some d—d good natured friend" whispered him, *in confidence*, that the Bishop was told he wore a *pig-tail*!

their employment, we preserve them in a state of undiminished vigour! Surely then a greyhound cannot be kept too calm and collected previous to his being slipped, and yet it rarely occurs that such is considered; a parcel of people meet together with twenty or thirty brace of dogs, and all in promiscuous confusion, equally eager to partake of the sport, but sadly deficient in the mode of enjoying it; one moment shall reward you with the championship of the day, and the next consign you to merited defeat; two dogs here are contending *for*, and others there are struggling *in* couples, whilst the irritated exclamations of an angry lord, and the joint extravagance of a giddy and intolerable mob, frequently present such a scene of wild disorder as perfectly to outstrip the flight of fancy. There possibly may be no means to obviate this entirely, but there are doubtless many methods calculated to restrain it, and endeavours have been made to effect it by the use of blinders, which, though not exactly answering the end proposed, must nevertheless, in some degree, be allowed to assist it: still, of all those which strike me as least liable to objection, is that of having a large and roomy tent, which might be removed after one

day's sport, to the spot where it was intended to course on the following. The station best calculated for such an object would be the summit or declivity of some contiguous hill; and in either case the sport might be so conducted that, in a plentiful country at least, little inconvenience should arise from having to send occasionally for fresh dogs: indeed there would be numberless advantages attending a plan of this description, and it very rarely happens that any country totally excludes its being adopted; for if you tell me that one country is flat and inclosed, or that in another, from the scarcity of game, the chief part of your time would be consumed in sending backwards and forwards for dogs; it is obvious that in each of these no coursing can be had in perfection, the badness of the hares in the one instance scarcely compensating for the rarity of them in the other. Hares, my dear G------, can never be good but where they possess the advantage of *winding* your dogs, and whenever I hear another person boasting that his dog has killed in each successive course, I as invariably determine that it must have been in a country which is regularly flat and low, and that, however success may have attended his efforts thus far, very different will be the result

when they are opposed to the formidable approaches of a continued and almost perpendicular ascent. What would such an enthusiast say when he saw not only his own dog beat out of sight by others, but even these almost generally in vain contending to manifest their superiority? In fact, there is little difference betwixt coursing in a low, flat country, and angling in a pond; any one who chuses thus to employ himself may be certain of killing, and the quantity may probably be termed, by those who think that "the proof of the pudding lies in the eating," tolerable sport: but little need is there indeed required to deprecate a system whose sole character is that of unlimited slaughter. I have heard of an old country gentleman who was a most determined *pot-hunter*, and whenever an hare was found sitting, desired his servant to observe if from her size, she was likely to make a good course or otherwise, but in either case, he had orders, if possible, "*to give her a knock*;" for by a strange analogy he would tell you that it was equally unpardonable to tantalize his dogs as it was useless to distress them. There is a laudable anxiety which should possess all sportsmen to make some shew, and for once, perhaps, in a man's life, this may be indulged in

beyond ordinary measure; but still further than the line of decency no excuse will warrant any one in going, and that kind of indiscriminate slaughter which merely satisfies the vanity of an individual, is, above all others, unmanly and reprehensible: the wants of ourselves, and the demands of our friends, can certainly never be so urgent or insatiable as to provoke deliberate destruction, for however the title may be occasionally softened by the plea of necessity, it loses all the semblance of virtuous distinction when impregnated with a selfish ambition. The wishes of mankind are easily satisfied so long as they are bounded by prudence and discretion, but in every condition of life it is equally difficult to check the progress of a rash intemperance. Are we to suppose a man a better sportsman for levelling his gun at all birds of every description, and for using it to satisfy a silly and childish propensity rather than a pleasant and needful relaxation? But, happily, my dear C------, you have nothing to dread from the most rigid scrutiny, for I am well aware there exists not at this moment a sportsman more liberal of his success nor more temperate in his pursuits.

LETTER VIII.

Amongst a certain class of individuals, nothing is more generally discussed, nor more lavishly abused than the laws which restrict the destruction of game, and there have not been wanting authors of considerable eminence who have treated it as an arbitrary and tyrannical mode of infringing the liberty of the subject. It has usually happened, however, that the argument lost much of its plausibility by the declaimers having no immediate interest in what they decried, except as it might lead to their own indulgence, and to do away an individual restraint, they would gladly compromise a general good. At first view, it may, perhaps, appear somewhat harsh, that persons, whose means are otherwise abundant, should be debarred the pursuit of an amusement which was originally

open to all; but upon an attentive consideration of every circumstance, we shall find that in former times this unrestricted permission gave rise to continual broils and idle propensities, and therefore the legislature wisely enacted those laws, equally for the protection of private right, and the benefit of public good*. The question about the right of sporting is now reduced to such an obvious certainty, that to make ignorance an excuse for committing a trespass is at once an unpardonable

* It would be going considerably beyond bounds to enter upon a legal discussion of what constitutes a qualification, but as disputes invariably arise concerning this point *out of court*, I will endeavour to explain the matter according to the best authorities, to prevent any recourse being had to a trial *within it*. These qualifications are founded upon the 22 and 23 C. 2, c. 25, and the 5th Ann, c. 14, s. 4, and 9th Ann, c. 25, and 18th Geo. 3, c. 93; under which, the owner and keeper of a forest, park, chase, or free warren, and the lord of a manor, and his gamekeeper within the manor, and the eldest son of an esquire, or of a person of higher degree, and a person having in his own or his wife's right an estate of inheritance of the *clear yearly value* of 100l. or an estate for life, or for 99 years, of the *clear yearly value* of 150l. are the *only* persons qualified *to keep* or *use* dogs or engines for the purpose of killing game: it is necessary also to understand the meaning of the words *clear yearly value*, for if the estate be liable to any charge (excepting the income tax) which shall reduce it below 100 or 150l. respectively, the qualification is, in such case, to be considered as perfectly destroyed.

error, and though the injury committed may in many instances be palliated by the plea of absolute want, it is surely little consonant to the ends of justice to excuse a delinquent for employing his time in surreptitious means when the opportunity always offers of a more advantageous dedication of it. Indeed, as I said before, if we look back to the æra when the game laws were first established, we shall see that they were principally levelled at idle and dissolute characters, and whatever changes they may have undergone in regard to title and qualification, the times will be found to justify most fully each particular restriction. To prevent a repetition of evil, and circumscribe the influence of inordinate ambition, were amongst the first institutions of civilized society; power should only be tolerated so long as it refrains from violating justice, and to withhold our approbation of measures calculated to check unreasonable aggression, would be as vicious and inconsistent as lending it to those which endeavoured to lay the foundation of it. In drawing this line of limited indulgence the legislature appears also to have had in view the means of the subject, and at any rate that his situation in life might fairly allow for occasional

pleasure, as it is not *to be supposed* that a qualified person can possibly be tempted to sport under the idea of emolument or profit: it is this impression which, in my idea, has occasioned a principal error; as it was impossible to guard against a change in the circumstances of mankind, so also has the character of their dispositions been overlooked, and at this moment I can very safely venture to assert, that game of every description receives greater injury from the illegal practices of qualified and licensed poachers than all the unauthorized scoundrels in the kingdom. Indeed, if any change be necessary to restore the pristine excellence of these laws, I should recommend such gentry particularly to notice who screen their depredations under the sanctity of a qualification, and who, instead of using their authority to check such libidinous proceedings, openly arrogate to themselves a kind of impudent celebrity, and defy the power which *merely* imposes a *pecuniary* penalty. I think if more severe and personal measures were resorted to, and that the common gaol were once hinted as likely to become the reward of such lawless proceeding, poaching in every shape would quickly disappear; public exposure is the most probable

method of disarming every species of vice, and by way of example I would begin with a *gentleman*, not two hundred miles from N---m---k---t, and particularly strict about his game, who, two seasons ago, sold upwards of fifteen hundred hares in Leadenhall Market! From hence we may form a tolerable estimate of the quantity of game annually disposed of in London: the number of fishmongers and poulterers, who, through the leniency of one set and the countenance of another, are allowed a traffic in game, amounts to about 600, and supposing, upon an average, that each sells 394 head of game in a season, it will appear that no less than 118,200 brace of grous, partridges, pheasants, and hares, exclusive of woodcocks, snipes, plover, dotterell, and water-fowl, regularly suffer, contrary to all rules of law and equity*.

* Allowing on an average that each brace of these sells for ten shillings, which, taking the price of grous at 12, partridges 5, pheasants 12, and hares 10, is about the mark, the full amount, according to the above statement of game sold in London, will be 59,100l. being nearly one half of the sum produced by the game certificates: but I am well aware that this calculation falls considerably below the reality, for, from the 12th of August to the 1st of February are 173 days, and, after deducting 25 from these as an allowance for Sundays, &c. the remaining 148 are proportioned

Can it be supposed then that such mal-practices are solely confined to those individuals who are neither licensed nor qualified, or even to a combination of both with the former of these? It is perfectly impossible; and unless the axe be laid at the root, the branches will imbibe all the vigour, and flourish in the full strength and confidence of unlimited support. There is no way of accounting for such a gross violation of the law but on the supposition that the remedies applicable to the disease are either inefficient, or that the efforts of an *individual* receive little or no compensation in endeavouring to enforce them. The fault, in my opinion, must be attributed to the latter cause, for where *associations* have been formed by those gentleman of property and respectability, who are alone qualified to prosecute, the country is, in a

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out as follows; viz. 16 days in August for the disposal of grous, and I allow that each of these 600 receiving houses sells one brace per day for that period, which, in the whole, will amount to 9600 brace, and that from the 1st of Sept. to the 1st of Feb.; each of these likewise sells one partridge per day, and one hare, the numbers of both will be 77,400 brace, and in the same manner of pheasants, from 1st of October to 1st of February, the quantity of birds thus disposed of will be 31,200 brace, making in the whole 118,200 brace, as above.

great measure, free from poaching, whilst in other places, where a self-created squire, or a proud lord, issue their occasional and magnanimous denunciations, the reward seldom advances beyond the odium of an harsh inquisitor or a tyrannical and selfish administrator of judicial authority. Little does it generally signify what means are used to check the progress of dissipation if they do not at the same time receive more than individual support, and it is only on the broad basis of general good that we can hope to reclaim a set of men who are perhaps naturally and habitually attached to rapine and disorder. These reflections have been, in some degree, confirmed by a late appeal to a jury of the country, where two of the most notorious characters that ever existed have confirmed their privilege to the title by preferring informations against different individuals who were in the habits of selling game, and though a verdict against the defendants was of necessity given, it was qualified with a remark which, though stigmatizing the objects of the applicants, fully coincided in the necessity of the appeal under circumstances of a more plausible pretext. We may, perhaps, from another cause, more particularly account for poachers taking

these unauthorized liberties, and also for having them in some measure sanctioned by persons the most strenuous for reform. There unfortunately subsists in general betwixt sportsmen of all classes too great a degree of easy familiarity, and it is perhaps the most difficult restraint upon a truly liberal mind so to conduct itself, in the ardour of pursuit, towards an inferior, when all distinction yields to individual and personal prowess, as that the measure of our present joy shall not authorize a future importunity: an uneducated being will anxiously seize an opportunity which thus frequently gives such fair promise of greedy triumph, and building upon no other foundation than the momentary ebullition of a generous disposition, commence a system of depredation, which not even a mutual and parallel compact could ever authorize. We must not also forget the injury which is done by many gentlemen, who either cannot, or will not, break their pointers, buying them of those who have no right even to keep such animals: this at once gives a kind of countenance to a traffic of the most dangerous tendency; for, as I presume there are few of these gentry who cannot give *some* character to his dog, it is but fair to suppose that, however it

may or may not be a just one, he has spared no pains to confirm him in the acquisition of it, and accordingly as this is strengthened by age and experience, so much the more have his depredations been successful. To exterminate, therefore, this baneful ascendancy of an usurped authority, I would recommend some revision of the dog-tax, so far, at least, as regards pointers, and if I did not exactly prohibit them from being kept so generally as they are, I would certainly subject the regular dealer to purchase his right, and exercise it under measures calculated to secure his advantage, and materially contribute to that of the public.

LETTER IX.

Amongst the qualifications which I mentioned in my last letter was that which is attached to the son and heir apparent of an Esquire, for though this particular title does not in itself solely confer the right of sporting, it nevertheless bestows it upon the next in succession; nor will it upon consideration appear so strange, as perhaps a momentary thought may suggest, as we may fairly presume that an Esquire has other and more extensive rights than the simple privilege of title, and therefore upon this supposition the qualification has been extended to the immediate and presumptive heir, a landed property being generally considered to be the object of the statute. It would swell the page too much to bring under our consideration all the acts which have at different times been passed by the legisla-

ture to sanction this restriction, but it may probably be not very irregular to consider the authority under which many gentlemen presume thus to support their privilege. Sir Wm. Blackstone observes that it is somewhat unsettled what constitutes a *real Esquire*, for it is not an estate, however large, which confers this rank upon the owner: but according to Camden there are four sorts of them, viz. 1st, The eldest sons of knights, and their eldest sons in perpetual succession: 2d, The eldest sons of younger sons of peers, and their eldest sons in like perpetual succession, which, by Sir Henry Spelman, are called *armigeri natalitii*: 3d, Esquires created by the king's letters patent, or other investiture, and their eldest sons: 4th, Esquires by virtue of their offices, as Justices of the Peace, and all others who bearing any office under the crown, and in their commissions and appointments being styled Esquire *by the King*, are entitled to that distinction for life. To these we may add the Esquires of Knights of the Bath, each of whom constitutes three at his installation; and all Scotch, Irish, and foreign peers: a barrister also, and a captain in the army or navy, are equally Esquires for the purposes of this act; but it has lately been determined

that the privilege is not extended to the eldest son of a captain of volunteers, for though the father in his commission may be styled Esquire, it is merely signed by the *Lord Lieutenant* of the county, who cannot confer honours. It appears from the table of precedence given by Sir Wm. Blackstone, that doctors in the learned professions are the next superiors in degree to Esquires, but to enable their eldest sons to claim the privilege of rank, the degree must have been conferred by an *English University*, all others being subject to certain qualifications, which the law, except by courtesy, does not recognise. So far we see the intended purpose of the "*jus scuti*," but, alas! "to what base uses we may return, Horatio?" and the heir apparent of every little grovelling slopseller now fancies himself as highly authorised to use the privilege of birth as if the current from whence he drew his existence flowed from as pure a source as the blood of a Howard. In every situation of life some allowance must be made for those sudden changes which we are not at all times prepared to meet; but how seldom do we see the *toga virilis* worn with either the becoming dignity or the unassuming manners of a gentleman: times, indeed,

are strange interpreters, and it could scarcely ever have been imagined that, in the reign of Edward the Fourth, George Nevile, Duke of Bedford, should be *deprived* of his nobility for *the want of means* to support it, and that during the present *glorious æra* of our magnanimous Regent others should be *exalted* to rank whose *sole title to possession* lay in the *property* which acquired it! But however rank and property may constitute a legal right for the purposes of sporting, they ought never to screen any one from a just infliction of punishment, if they are made the vehicle of abuse; and though there are many men whose situations thus enable them to *lord it* over their more quiet and peaceable neighbours, it is to be hoped that this equally respectable part of society are rapidly emerging from that fatal propensity to indifference which has so long sanctioned an encroachment hostile to all reason, and subversive of every principle of independence. It seldom indeed happens that a man who, on the contrary, takes his amusement becoming a gentleman, is ever denied the privilege of his rank, and certainly if we wish for any relaxation of this nature the least we can do is to request permission to enjoy it, and such pre-

vious and necessary leave must be, as I have before observed, so well understood by all descriptions of persons, that it is scarcely possible to find an excuse in any degree adequate to the crime of infringement, for it is not only that of a positive law, but of a social and honorable compact.--- Strange, however, as it may appear, we have one instance of a gentleman using his pen to no better purpose than that of first seducing a sportsman to trespass, and afterwards encouraging him to pursue it; and in fact if we are to judge of the reception such advice has experienced from the rapidity of its circulation, his will not prove to have been an idle display of eloquence*. When men of an hasty and illiterate disposition unfortunately meet with instruction of this nature, apparently issuing from a plausible authority, the consequences are too obvious to admit of a single doubt as to the

* See a book on "Shooting" by B. Thomas, wherein he recommends very strongly, that, *if* you are caught out of bounds by another person's gamekeeper, and he has not his certificate about him, you are not to go off by *mere verbal discharge*, but insist upon *seeing* his *authority*, which he prophetically adds may be at some distance, and therefore afford you a still further opportunity of prolonging the *very gentlemanly conduct* you have already commenced!!!

event which must follow, and it would only be matter of just retribution, if, when visiting the crime of the offender, a corresponding punishment were inflicted on the primitive instigator. Such publications have too serious and obvious a tendency to need much comment; it is at all times sufficient to state the law as it is written, without construing it in a manner too prominent not to escape observation, and too tempting not to challenge indulgence. Amongst the efforts which a chaste and liberal mind has frequently an opportunity of displaying, no one can be more usefully applied, nor ought to be more thankfully received, than that which animates us to the pursuit of good and lawful actions, and restrains the ardor of licentious passions: but such sentimental reasoning, my dear G------, you will say, I have no right to indulge in, and I already fear you have accused me of trespassing upon a manor far beyond the limits of my jurisdiction. I wish, however, it were possible to instil some good logic into "those arbiters of the fate of thousands," and observe the progress of time in recalling a set of men from the most unbounded and barbarous maxims to those of a less splendid, perhaps, but more permanent and gratifying nature.

Monday,

I have lately, my dear G——, been in Suffolk, and in that part of it where the game is preserved with an unusual degree of strictness, and which, in one instance, borders upon a species of usurpation seldom, I believe, equalled. It is not that the cautious warnings of *men-traps* and *spring guns* are proclaimed at the corner of every coppice, nor that a game-keeper there is endued with the wonderful and *corvine* sagacity of smelling a grain of gunpowder, however remote from his view, which awakens the remark, for each of these is at the best a very questionable expedient; but the means to which I allude are so entirely contrary to the doctrine of a true sportsman, that it will scarcely be supposed such can be suffered to exist. A man whose property perhaps is barely sufficient to yield him a qualification, by assuming to himself an air of consequence and magnifying his means beyond their real extent, prevails upon the good-humoured landlord of one farm and the unsuspecting owner of another to admit him as their tenants, which is no sooner accomplished

than he goes to market with his bargain and re-lets it to any man, or set of men, at a considerably reduced rent, who are silly enough to suffer themselves to be tied down to a strict preservation of every head of game upon their respective tenures. Thus our "*filius terra*" becomes at once both landlord and tenant, and denounces the vengeance of the law with all the authority of feudal presumption. There needs not, in my opinion, a stronger motive to abrogate the law, as it now stands, than the certain reality of such an existing abuse; it is indeed an infringement which every successive legislature has entirely overlooked, and to which every future one ought to be most carefully attentive. Should the times so far revive from their present confused and variable condition as to allow a more sober and impartial discussion of the means of national resources and internal tranquillity, we may hope, perhaps, that some provident statesman will espouse a cause which has so long lingered under the want of a consistent advocate, and that by coming to a proper understanding of real and presumed right---the one shall be as far removed from oppression, as the other shall tolerate an innovation. By an act passed in

the last session of parliament, a qualified person may now take out with him any number of unqualified assistants, provided they do not make use themselves of instruments of a destructive nature---such as gun, dog, net, &c.; and therefore so much of all other acts, as forbade this indulgence, is effectually repealed. I believe this has given a great and very general satisfaction; but I much doubt if it will be equally beneficial, and I question whether the deficit in the game licences of last season may not, in some measure, be attributed to this cause. I grant that both appellants and respondents were actuated by good and honest motives; and on a superficial view, the ends of private indulgence may appear to be gained at no great sacrifice of public good. But I wish to know if this will not be a very great means of reviving that noxious and dissolute spirit of idleness, to check which, has been the object of every successive precaution; and whether the opportunity, which is now afforded to an assistant, will not eventually embolden him to become a principal? We are perfectly certain that nine-tenths of the destruction amongst game takes place in the night-time, and that nothing is

wanting to make it more general but a knowledge of those particular places where it is to be found. This difficulty is then at present, in a great degree, removed; for though it does not always follow that the assistant is himself the poacher, yet his information, either voluntary or purchased, will be equally effective: and I fancy there are few men so situated in life as to be at all times capable of resisting temptation on the one hand, or of preserving a strict discretion on the other. I do not, however, mean to contend for the entire abolition of what the law now allows; nor indeed am I aware how it can be amended. The indulgence may be deemed a necessary one, and in certain cases it undoubtedly is, particularly towards those gentlemen whose chief pursuit is coursing; but at the same time it has opened such a multiplicity of avenues for transgression, without enlarging the means of detection, that we must not yet subscribe with too great confidence to the wisdom of the measure: "seris venit usus ab annis."

After all the arguments, however, which the most vigorous imagination can form, or the most

able reasoning advance, little is to be effected against the system of poaching, unless the example receive the authority and is sanctioned by the conduct of men really and properly interested. Betwixt all gentlemen who are *truly* qualified, there ought, in this instance, to be a certain community of right, removed from all party or malicious distinction, and subject solely to those laws which connect the higher classes of society. If, instead of bartering away game for fish, poultry, wine, or other luxuries for a London table*, our gentry were more profuse of their favours at home, they would have less cause to dread a precarious supply; for when such unjust and illiberal expedients are resorted to for purposes equally reprehensible, we cannot wonder at the example becoming a kind of epidemical disease, and opposing to the fictitious calls of indulgence the more powerful incentives of necessity. Happy will it be when this subject, so frequently and warmly discussed, is

* It is too often the practice for families of *title and consequence*, during their *rustication* from town in the autumn, to send up a weekly supply of game to their poulterers, fishmongers, &c. who, in return, balance the account with the various produce of *their calling*.

reduced by example into a more pleasing and appropriate form, and when every sportsman shall feel a more general interest than he does at present for the successful efforts of his fellow.

LETTER X.

I HAVE called upon Mr. ------, my dear G------, as you requested, and had the good fortune to find him employed in putting the finishing touch to your old and favourite companion; but from the account I had previously received from you, I expected to have seen a very different picture. Sporting subjects are, in my opinion, the most difficult of all others to turn to any good account, for this reason, that there is not one artist in five hundred who is the least conversant in the matter, and even with the very best instructions to direct him, how rarely does it happen that his utmost endeavors are capable of exciting corresponding emotions. It might fairly be supposed that the works of an English artist would least of all be liable to objection: he lives, as it were, amidst

" the various science of the chase," and his natural inheritance is " the heart-cheering pleasure of the fields;" but a survey of those annual exhibitions, which are the best criterion of talent, will afford a very moderate specimen of excellence, and fully convince the complete sportsman of the just observation of the poet—

" Nec semper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus."

The three most conspicuous characters which this country ever produced in this line of painting, were STUBBS, GILPIN, and MORLAND, but their excellencies are decidedly opposite. Upon a comparative view of the merits of the two former artists, we shall find that although each possesses a considerable share, they are, nevertheless, widely different; and that, notwithstanding the diversity of opinion upon the claims of each, the admirers of both may still have their full portion of enjoyment. We may call the horses of STUBBS perhaps more correct, but yet we cannot divest them of their stiffness; the outline of his drawing may be bold in conception, but yet far from finished in execution; he may shew the full force of muscle and power, but scarce in any instance

combines it with elegance, or fashions it from nature; so that "the sprightly steed" would to this moment have remained inactive, if GILPIN, like another PROMETHEUS, had not animated him with celestial fire. The sphere in which MORLAND moved was so totally different from both of these, that no comparison will hold good, except as it regards individual excellence: his models were all drawn from nature it is true, but then it was nature in her humblest garb, and to have dressed her in any other would have resembled the introduction of a clown at a public drawing-room. It was scarcely possible indeed for a genius like his to fail in the attainment of any object within the sphere of its attraction, for his habits of life were so congenial to the exact line of his profession, that he may be said to have possessed a freer access to the toilet of his mistress than either of his predecessors. That he reaped every advantage which such an intercourse had the power of conferring, requires but little argument, I think, to prove; and to the extent of his performances, he may be justly styled the THEOCRITUS of painters. Amongst the present motley candi-

dates for renown, there are but two perhaps who have the smallest claim to notice; one of these may truly say "exegi monumentum," but whether deserving the character which the remainder of the verse bestows, will be best determined by the opinion of after ages. Amongst the many extraordinaries which have been handed down to us by various successive writers, the well-known story of Zeuxis and Parrhasius is not the least remarkable; still a circumstance, which I have been told happened a very few years ago, will be a sufficient proof that in *extravagancy* at least we are not so easily subdued. An artist of some merit assured me (and with a degree of confidence I cannot question) that a gentleman, for whom he was painting a favorite dog in the attitude of pointing, happened to enter his room one morning with another pointer, which no sooner perceived her companion

> "with his instinctive nose upon
> The trembling prey,"

than she instantly backed him, and stood in this position until a sketch was made, adding her to the group! Compared with this, *the grapes* lose

all their flavour, and *the curtain* is a vain concealment.

Amongst all the sporting pictures which I am acquainted with, I do not recollect to have seen at any time the subject of coursing properly treated: the greyhound alone, like any other animal in an indifferent posture, is easily pourtrayed, and many artists have so far proved themselves eminently successful; but when a more lively interest is to be excited, and the powers of nature are to be exhibited in a more animated form, fancy is suffered to supersede reality, and probability becomes bewildered amidst the mazes of conjecture. Even the famous picture by Gilpin, in the collection of Colonel Thornton, does not give us that full possession of the subject which the mind so anxiously enquires after.

How different is it from the beautiful description which OVID gives of the flight of Daphne from the embraces of Apollo!

> Ut canis in vacuo leporem cum Gallicus arvo
> Vidit; et hic prædam pedibus petit, ille salutem:
> Alter inhæsuro similis, jam jamque tenere

Sperat, et extento stringit vestigia rostro:
Alter in ambiguo est, an sit deprensus: et ipsis
Morsibus eripitur; tangentiaque ora relinquit.
Sic deus, et virgo est: &c. &c.*

How forcibly does this bring to our recollection the many courses we have seen so stoutly contested on the Wolds, when a gallant hare, seeking the protection of a neighbouring cover, boldly challenged her pursuers to the plain; and bidding defiance to the best efforts of blood and condition, at length gained her retreat, amidst the animated clamour of an applauding field. Though Gilpin's picture is decidedly the best of the kind, we could wish perhaps that he had given us some detail; and after the manner of the "DEATH of the FOX," let us a little more into the character of coursing: I am not aware however that a stronger interest has been excited by the intro-

* As when th' impatient greyhound slipt from far,
Bounds o'er the glebe to course the fearful hare;
She in her speed does all her safety lay;
And he with double speed pursues the prey;
O'er-runs her at the sitting-turn, and licks
His chaps in vain, and blows upon the flix:
She 'scapes, and for the neighbouring covert strives,
And gaining shelter, doubts if yet she lives: &c. &c.
DRYDEN.

duction of the gallant colonel; his figure would have been more appropriately placed in the distance, for, according to the tradition of the sportsmen of his day, his station in the field was usually in the rear. It is somewhat surprising, that in all the great variety of sporting pictures which this gentleman possesses, himself should be invariably seen the leading character; and whether in the heat of the chace, in the midst of "aerial fights," or recovering from the fatigue of an Highland excursion, this "regnandi dira cupido" appears the sole mainspring of every action.

One might naturally imagine that the generality of sportsmen would be less solicitous to range themselves under the standard of notoriety, and equally regardless of courting the gaze of an undisciplined mob; for if the character is to be preserved with a due regard to style and manner, the most sober individual then lapses into downright caricature; and by "throwing all his soul into the rapid chase," loses at once his sanctity and decorum. If indeed it were absolutely necessary to introduce figures of this description, the

usual and necessary attendants upon a pack of fox-hounds would, in my opinion, be the most profitable for the purpose; for without endangering the fame of the subject they would add greatly to its title and support, by allowing an artist to place them in those situations where most probably they would in reality be, and not loading his foreground with others, where nothing but their own ridiculous absurdity would ever have brought them. Artists, however, are not always innocent of such palpable outrage; for though they are frequently obliged to deviate from the paths of consistency at the express commands of their employers, we nevertheless have many instances where they themselves founder; for instance, HEAPHY, two years ago, exhibited a beautiful drawing of a group of fish---pike, tench, carp, and trout, and huddled them together on the bank of a river, as if newly caught; but by a strange and unparellelled conception, made an addition of a *boiled lobster*, which at once broke every charm awakened by probability, and left us to regret the cause which so lucklessly induced him *to force* an effect. It ought to be recollected

that although the "quidlibet audendi potestas" may be the natural inheritance of every painter, he is neither to lavish his patrimony on improper connections, nor reject an opportunity of usefully applying it.

To those gentlemen who find little amusement within, and are vapoured to death if they are disappointed in the pursuit of it out of doors, the following Table of the Weather, by Dr. Herschell, will not perhaps be unacceptable: it is grounded upon a philosophical consideration of the attraction of the sun and moon in their several positions respecting the earth.

New or Full Moon.	*Summer.*	*Winter.*
If it be new or full moon, or the moon entering into the first or last quarters at the hour of 12 at noon, or between the hours of	Very rainy	Snow and rain
2 and 4	Changeable	Fair and mild
4 — 6	Fair	Fair
6 — 8	Fair, if wind be N. W. Rainy, if S. or S. W.	Fair and frosty, if wind N. or N.E. Rain and snow, if S. or S. W.
8 — 10	Ditto	Ditto
10 — 12 night	Fair	Fair and frosty
12 — 2	Ditto	Hard frost, if wind not S. or S. W.
2 — 4	Cold, with frequent showers	Snow and stormy
4 — 6	Rain	Ditto
6 — 8	Wind and rain	Stormy
8 — 10	Changeable	Cold rain, if wind be W. Snow if E.
10 — 12 noon	Frequent showers	Cold, with high wind

Hence the nearer the time the moon's entrance at *full, change,* and *quarters* to *midnight* (*i. e.* within two hours before and after it) the *more fair* the weather is *in summer;* but the nearer at noon the *less fair.* Also the moon's entrance at *full, change* and *quarters* during six of the *afternoon* hours, *viz.* from 4 to 10 may be followed by *fair weather,* but this chiefly depends on the *wind.* The same entrance at all the hours *after midnight* (except the *two first)* is *unfavorable* to fair weather.

SIR,

You must know that I have been a great sportsman, and that even every thing I now do is done in a sportsman-like style; thus for instance, the pen with which this letter is written was taken from the wing of a wild peacock, the only one ever seen in this part of the country; the paper on which I write was manufactured from the remnants of some old shirts of my grandfather, which he never wore but on particular hunting days; and a proportion of the ink was furnished from the gall of a notorious bull, which, for ten years successively, was a source of infinite pastime at all the wakes in the county: such a letter, therefore, sealed with the appropriate and heraldic impression of a fox *couraut*, in a field *vert*, will be sufficient to give to my character the *stamp* of some originality. But these are a very few particulars of what I consider my chief reputation; I am universally known as the sporting squire, and as it is the highest title at which my ambition

arms, I have spared neither trouble nor expence, nor omit any opportunity of confirming the privilege. My father was a man of considerable independance, and both by education and disposition a complete sportsman, so that he had already elevated himself to the rank of leader with every pack of hounds in the neighbourhood, when a new incident occurred to encrease his claim to precedency; he was chosen to fill the office of high-sheriff, and as a reward for the steadiness of his conduct, during a period of some disturbance, was, in the course of his official duties, created a knight. To say that I am indebted to this cause for my introduction into the world, is more than my limited knowledge of astrology will allow; but as the two circumstances happened within ten months of each other, I think I may fairly attribute the latter to the first expoit of chivalrous ardor. I may be said to have commenced my sporting career almost "ab ovo," for I fortunately made my appearance on the first of September, a day of all others the most congenial to my father's wishes: in this instance it was "doubly blessed," as it gave him an opportunity of firing

away an extra pound of powder in the morning, and yielding to the generous impulse of conviviality by celebrating its return in an additional bottle in the evening.

For the first twelve years of my life I was left solely to my own disposal; the stable and the kitchen were the sources from whence I drew all my information, and upon the authority of which I modelled every action. At this period I had lost both my parents, and the *cautious* foresight of my father had resigned me over to the entire control of Mr. Benjamin Goosequill, an attorney, who had for some years principally managed his concerns, and was consequently become, in his estimation, a superior sort of being. My situation now appeared no less strange than unexpected, and from never having been accustomed to calculate I felt somewhat puzzled to conjecture the probable issue of my translation. It will scarcely be expected that I *felt* much sorrow, whatever I might *express*, for I had never been taught to regret the loss of any object otherwise than as it affected my own *immediate* enjoyment: thus I

had become totally callous to the misfortunes of others, and doubly tender when I fancied myself the sufferer.

I will not, sir, tire your patience with a recital of the many mortifications I endured on finding myself deprived of my usual amusements, nor how my heart was overwhelmed with grief, when, at a sale of my father's effects, my old and favourite poney was purchased for a youth of my own age, betwixt whom and myself there had long existed an envious competition. My chagrin was only equalled by his exultation, and the triumph of my rival was so nearly complete that I was on the point of stigmatizing, with every epithet of abuse, the only animal which had hitherto yielded me a moment's gratification.

My guardian was a man who had seen nothing of the world beyond the boundary of his own county, except when his professional duties called him, probably once in two seasons, to visit the metropolis, and the journal of his travels was then only varied by the casualties which had occurred amongst his old associates, so that he usually re-

turned with a woeful account of fresh faces and extra charges, impertinent coachmen and unconscionable landlords. I continued under the roof of this sober personage until I had attained my nineteenth year, with no greater increase to my original stock of knowledge than what is usually acquired at an endowed day-school. At the end of this period it was judged necessary to initiate me a little deeper into "the nature of things," and I accordingly agreed to enter myself of the Temple. The dry study of the law was not a very probable method of winning me over to the practice of it, nor indeed was this intended; the object was rather with the view of external than internal ornament, and my protector *rightly* judged that such was more easily acquired amongst the students of the bar than those of the university. My residence in London was of so short a continuance that I should scarce have thought it worthy of notice, had it not been to shew my utter dislike of every thing in the least calculated to wean me from my favorite diversions. I lost no time therefore in quitting my new associates and in re-breathing an atmosphere more congenial to the habits of my constitution. I found little difficulty in persuad-

ing my guardian that all was for the best, and that if I had prolonged my stay I might not only have materially injured my health but also my purse: the period of my non-age was on the eve of expiring, and in a short time I took the management of those reins myself which had hitherto restrained my ardor. The best description I can give of the pleasure which animated me on this occasion will be in presenting a detailed account of the establishment which I then thought necessary to support, and leaving it to you, sir, to judge how far I am deserving the character of a *proper* sportsman. In the first place my stud of twelve horses were all thorough bred, and by an adroitness peculiar to myself I made out a pedigree for each that would not have disgraced the best crosses of either HEROD or ECLIPSE. My fame as a breeder was thus quickly established, and the numerous purchases that were made from me, by those *younger* than myself, gave me an opportunity of proving the *disinterested* motives upon which I acted: but, alas! though sprung from the blood of the omnipotent JUPITER, they inherited nearly all the bad qualities of *mortal* imperfection, and during the period of my greatest notoriety

scarcely any one of them ever enhanced his master's credit. My hounds, however, were something more fortunate, and as they were the means of continuing to me a circle of acquaintance whom I found it *useful* to retain, I spared no trouble in preserving the purity of their descent; indeed the extraordinary chases we frequently had, made it a matter of doubt with many if the different statements were equally accurate, or whether in the North we possessed a particular breed of foxes, which could, "for a need," take a line of some twenty or thirty miles that should be set down to 'em. My shooting establishment bore an equal character with this I have already related, and my pointers and spaniels were in no less repute than my hounds; for to such perfection did I bring the former, and so excellent were their noses, that I could have almost insured them to find game where none had been bred, and by a system of discipline, *peculiar to myself*, the latter were so trained as either to *stand* or *flush*. My guns, of which I had the greatest variety, even to the extent of seven barrels, were made by different artists, and although not always perhaps of an *unerring* quality, the remedies I applied of giving to each

A smart figure and a neat address gave me an introduction to society which might have been turned to the best advantage, but as matrimony was not *yet* my aim, I preferred devoting the hours of tender dalliance to females of a lighter class, whose affections were with less difficulty obtained and more conveniently got rid of. Amongst those who had ministered to the gratification of my wishes was one, who at length obtained over me the most unbounded control: it is true that I had raised her from obscurity and a state of indigence to comparative splendor, and that she was now in the possession of every enjoyment which a *reasonable* woman could possibly desire, and in return repaid me with all those little flattering attentions that steal unawares to the heart and gratify the vanity of man; but I knew she was at the same time in possession of a secret which, if once proclaimed, my gallantry was at an end. This lady I shall designate by the name of CAMILLA, for like her

> "Unus'd to spinning, in the loom unskill'd,
> She chose the nobler Pallas of the field."

It happened during one of those convivial moments when folly sometimes usurps the place of reason, that our heroine's equestrian performances became the subject of conversation, and upon a gentleman present roundly asserting that he knew *she was to be beat*, I did not hesitate to challenge him to the trial; the agreement was quickly executed and each side entered upon the necessary arrangements. For the first time in my life I found an antagonist who was more than a match for me; we had both been led to form erroneous conclusions of each other; he of my unwillingness to exhibit a person, for whom I professed such regard, in so glaring a situation, and I of his delicacy that would have paid any forfeit rather than enforce it: in a word, sir, the match was run, and although I used every expedient which the human mind is fertile in devising to turn the tide of success in my favor, my utmost efforts were unavailing, and after the most complete *beating* that any gentleman ever had the *honor* of receiving, I bade a final adieu to all turf exhibitions, with a firm resolution never again to enter the lists with an opponent without *previously* settling the terms of accommodation.

I have thus, sir, presented you with a faithful narrative of part of the history of your friend,

THE SQUIRE.

END OF PART III.

W. WILSON, Printer, 4, Greville-Street, Hatton-Garden, London.

